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# **NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL**

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

## **THESIS**

**THE ROLE OF THREAT IN THE DYNAMICS OF THE  
PHILIPPINE-UNITED STATES ALLIANCE**

by

Randy M. Pascua

December 2014

Thesis Advisor:  
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**THE ROLE OF THREAT IN THE DYNAMICS OF THE PHILIPPINE-UNITED  
STATES ALLIANCE**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN DEFENSE ANALYSIS**

from the

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## **ABSTRACT**

Threat serves as an impetus in the foundation, development, revitalization, and waning of the contemporary Philippine-United States alliance. Using Stephen Walt's balance of threat theory as the analytical framework, this study proves that, historically, the dynamics of the Philippine-U.S. alliance revolves around the interaction of threat-centric issues and the member-state's response. Threat serves as the prime mover of the alliance; foreign aid, ideological solidarity, and institutional penetration do not guarantee the alliance stability. They do, however, serve as critical factors in the alliance management. Shared or unshared existential threats with external overtones have a greater impact on the alliance. Moreover, internal security threats affect alliance efficiency. A coordinated approach is needed to confront and master them.

The Philippine Communist Insurgency of the CPP-NPA-NDF, the South China Sea Dispute with China, the ambiguity of 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty provisions including its executory mechanisms, and U.S. "strategic ambivalence" in the case of conflict serve as disconnecting factors of the Philippine-U.S. alliance. These factors created and continue to create friction between the Philippines and the United States. This study recommends that the allies must align their threat assessments, resolve or manage disconnecting threats, and then address the ambiguity of the agreement through further research and deeper strategic discourse.



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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
AMLC	Anti-Money Laundering Council
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian nation
ASG	Abu Sayyaf Group
AQ	Al Qaeda
BBL	Bangsamoro Basic Law
BIFM	Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters
COIN	Counter Insurgency
CPP	Communist Party of the Philippines
CTF	Counter Terrorism Financing
EDA	Excess Defense Article
EDCA	Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EU	European Union
DFA	Department of Foreign Affairs
FID	Foreign Internal Defense
FMF	Foreign Military Financing
FTO	Foreign Terrorist Organization
GPH	Government of the Philippines
GWOT	Global War on Terrorism
HUKBALAHAP	Hukbong Bayan Laban Sa Hapon
IPO	Ideological, Political, and Organizational
ISIS	Islamic States of Iraq and Syria
ISO	Internal Security Operations
ISW	International Solidarity Works
JASIG	Joint Agreement on Security and Immunity Guarantee
JI	Jemaah Islamiyah
JUSMAG	Joint United States Military Assistance Group
JSOTF-P	Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines
KIM	Khilafah Islamiyah Movement

MDB	Mutual Defense Board
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MLSA	Mutual Logistics Support Agreement
MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDF/NDFP	National Democratic Front of the Philippines
NPA	New People's Army
OPAPP	Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process
ORW	Overseas Revolutionary Works
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PN	Philippine Navy
PH	Philippines
PRC	People's Republic of China
PS	Philippine Scouts
SCS	South China Sea
SEB	Security Exchange Board
SFA	Security Force Assistance
SOFA	Status of Forces Agreement
SLOC	Sea Lines of Communication
TAP	Triple Action Plan
TD	Territorial defense
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	United Nations Conventions on the Law of the Seas
US	United States
USAFFE	United States Armed Forces in the Far East
USG	United States Government
VFA	Visiting Forces Agreement

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To Almighty God, thank you very much!

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Republic of the Philippines (PH) and the United States (U.S.) maintain close security relations forged by the four decades of U.S. colonization of the Philippines (1898–1946), extensive military cooperation, and a bilateral security alliance.<sup>1</sup> The security partnership’s history traces from the onset of the Spanish-American War (1898–1902), through World War II (1941–1945), the Korean War (1950–1953), the Vietnam War (1964–1975), the Persian Gulf War (1990–1991), the Iraq War (2003–2004), and today’s Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). The contemporary Philippine-U.S. alliance evolved from a strategic military partnership into a formal one. The signing of the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT) between the Philippine and United States representatives formalized the alliance. The MDT guarantees the protection of the two nations’ common strategic and economic interests. Significantly, the member states are obligated for a mutual defense in case of foreign aggression. The MDT and its mechanisms provide an opportunity for the Philippines and the United States to pursue both their respective and shared strategic interests. Together, The Philippines and the United States continue to face the challenge of existential traditional and non-traditional threats via their bilateral security alliance. Currently, the U.S. designates the Philippines as a major non-North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) ally.<sup>2</sup>

### **A. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Imagine two skillful dancers dancing passionately, but clumsily, they keep stepping on each other’s shoes. Their individual skill is unquestionable but because one prefers hip-hop and the other ballroom, their unshared passion for tango makes them uncoordinated. The security relationship between the Philippines and the United States is comparable to two skillful but uncoordinated dancers. Both states dance in their

---

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Lum and Ben Dolven, “The Republic of The Philippines and U.S. Interests-2014,” *Current Politics and Economics of South, Southeastern, and Central Asia* 23, no. 2 (2014), 1.

<sup>2</sup> George W. Bush, “Memorandum on Designation of the Philippines as a Major Non-NATO Ally,” *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, October 13, 2003, 1337.



respective shoes, but presently they are uncoordinated. As partners, both must attempt greater coordination to better face the music.

Tied by the bilateral alliance, the United States and the Philippines jointly confront various threat-centric concerns in the domestic, regional, and in the global security realm. Historically, threats serve as an impetus in the establishment and development of the Philippine-U.S. alliance. The alliance continues to challenge the onslaught of varied forms of traditional and non-traditional threats. Presently, the Philippine-U.S. alliance focuses on resolving the existential threat of China's assertive expansionism in the South China Sea (SCS), and the curbing of Islamic terrorism in Southern Philippines as part of the U.S. GWOT. However, the Philippines and the United States reveal an unshared threat in their alliance threat-assessment priority.

The Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GPH) views internal security conflicts as the foremost national security interest, followed by external security threats.<sup>3</sup> At present, the Philippines confront four existential security threats. First, the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army-National Democratic Front (CNN) continues to wage a nationwide protracted communist insurgency that seeks to overthrow the GPH. Second, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) attempts to secede from the Philippines to form a Bangsamoro state in Southern Mindanao. Third, the Al-Qaeda-linked (AQ) Islamic terrorist Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) continues to advocate the establishment of an Islamic caliphate using extreme coercive violence and banditry. Fourth, China's Asia-Pacific expansion and its assertive encroachment on Philippine sovereignty threaten its national interest and territorial integrity. Of the three internal security threats, the GPH defines the resilient CNN as the top internal security threat.<sup>4</sup> The CNN continues to wage an enduring protracted political and armed struggle with the intention of supplanting the existing Philippine democratic ideology with a totalitarian communist state.<sup>5</sup> The CNN continues to challenge the GPH through a nationwide

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<sup>3</sup> National Economic and Development Authority, "Peace and Security," in *Philippine Development Plan 201–2016* (Pasig, Philippines: National Economic and Development Authority, 2011), 293–294.

<sup>4</sup> Armed Forces of the Philippines, "Strategic Environment," in *Internal Peace and Security Plan: Bayanihan* (Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City: Armed Forces of the Philippines, 2011), 10.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

violent armed struggle and unified political offensive in the socio-political domain threatening the Philippines internal security stability. On the matter of external security concerns, the GPH actively opposes the assertive expansionism of China in the SCS through diplomatic and legal means. For several decades now, China has continually challenged the Philippines through encroachment activities and active military overtures. Its action of occupying reefs and shoals within Philippine's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) threatens the latter's territorial integrity and economic sources. China's maritime dominance subjugates the Philippines' ability to protect its territorial integrity and the EEZ. Its active imposition of control on the SCS through confrontational strategy poses a potential risk in the escalation of conflict. The China threat exists as a prime external security interest of the Philippines.

The primary security concerns of the United States in the region are the Chinese Asia-Pacific expansion and the GWOT. China's persistent aggressive expansionism and military adventurism in the SCS threaten regional security, freedom of navigation, and challenges for U.S. allies. For instance, Chinese aggressive expansionism is evident in its imposition of the so-called 'nine-dash line.' Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia Daniel Russel testified before the U.S. Congress in February 2014 that it was "an incremental effort by China to assert control over the area contained in the so-called 'nine-dash line.'<sup>6</sup> In addition, China's one-sided declaration of an East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) threatens freedom of navigation.<sup>7</sup> China's military adventurism directly challenges U.S. military naval forces. In 2009, five Chinese military vessels swarmed and harassed the *USNS Impeccable* in the SCS forcing the latter to make an emergency stop, and recently, a provocative Chinese action culminated in a near-collision on December 5, 2014, when the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy vessel tried to block the *USS Cowpens*, a naval military cruiser.<sup>8</sup> This chain of events triggered the strategic pivot of the United States in the Asia-Pacific region. In 2012, the

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<sup>6</sup> Lum and Doven, *The Republic of The Philippines and the U.S. Interest-2014*, 17.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Simon Denyer and William Wan, "U.S. Complains to China after Warships Narrowly Avoided Collision," *Washington Post*, sec. Asia & Pacific, December 14, 2014, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia\\_pacific/us-complains-to-china-after-warships-narrowly-avoid-collision/2013/12/14/b224c610-64ea-11e3-af0d-4bb80d704888\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/us-complains-to-china-after-warships-narrowly-avoid-collision/2013/12/14/b224c610-64ea-11e3-af0d-4bb80d704888_story.html).

U.S. Strategic Guidance articulated a strategic shift towards the Asia Pacific region, focused on maintaining regional access and rebalancing the power, but most importantly to strengthen existing Asian alliances.<sup>9</sup> In addition, the United States continues to focus on the GWOT aiding the GPH in its war against the AQ-linked local and transnational Islamic terrorist networks operating in the Southern Philippines.

The Philippine-U.S. alliance shows a gap in its joint threat assessment priority. The alliance partners have a differing perspective on target priority. At present, Islamic terrorism and Chinese expansionism are the central threat concerns for the alliance. The resilient CNN's nationwide communist insurgency remains a less significant priority for the alliance that establishes a gap. Based on this context, this study raises several questions, including: "What factor disconnects the Philippines and the United States in their bilateral security alliance? What is the role of threat in the dynamics of the alliance?"

## **B. IMPORTANCE AND PURPOSE**

States join alliances for a definite purpose. For whatever those purposes, states form alliances to satisfy shared and respective interests. However, states must be aware that in an alliance, members undertake an individual level of responsibility and commitment in the pursuit of a shared objective for the good of the alliance. A disparity in the stated purpose, or uncoordinated actions, may prove disastrous to the alliance. When the formation and management of the alliance revolves around threats, the parties in an alliance must determine and acknowledge shared and unshared threats and their consequential disconnecting factors. The acknowledgment of the alliance gaps by both parties serve as stimuli in the alignment of the alliance's threat assessments that facilitates the reformulation of joint strategies. In connection with this, the alliance established mechanisms could be further refined and formulated into new ones as a measure to counter the effect of threats among both nations. This step ensures that the alliance is functioning efficiently and that gaps and disconnecting factors are addressed.

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<sup>9</sup> Leon E. Panetta et al., "Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership Priorities for 21st Century Defense," Dept. of Defense, <http://purl.fdlp.gov/GPO/gpo18079>; <http://purl.fdlp.gov/GPO/gpo18079> [http://www.defense.gov/news/Defense\\_Strategic\\_Guidance.pdf](http://www.defense.gov/news/Defense_Strategic_Guidance.pdf).

This study provides additional knowledge on the dynamics of the contemporary Philippine-U.S. alliance, and focuses on explaining the role of threat on its formation and management. This study highlights the existential threats and the disconnecting factors affecting the relationship between the Philippines and the United States. Through the determination of the role of threat and the disconnecting factors of the alliance, this study provides a suggested path the Philippines and the United States should pursue on strengthening the alliance or downgrading the alliance into a strategic-type partnership. In addition, this study can serve as a catalyst in conducting in-depth studies to focus on the issues discovered.

### **C. MAIN ARGUMENT**

Threat serves as an impetus in the foundation and development of the alliance. The existence of the threat influences the management of the alliance. The presence of shared threats obligates states to enter into an alliance in which they jointly act to maximize security by aggregating their capacities. States in alliance formalize agreements to legalize collective undertakings in pursuit of shared goals. They create mechanisms to serve as shields and swords in confronting the challenges posed by the existential security threats and from constitution-based problems. Moreover, the management of an alliance requires the continuous creation, reformulation, and institutionalization of mechanisms to maintain the integrity of the alliance and maximize its use. This study argues that an unshared existential security threat and shared threat approached unilaterally, or in an uncoordinated manner, creates a gap in the alliance threat assessment that affects the overall efficiency of the alliance. Furthermore, these unresolved alliance issues influence the established mechanisms that further disconnect the alliance. This study further asserts that the Philippines and the United States should approach the issues contentiously, but in a synchronized manner. They should strive to align the alliance threat assessment, address the ambiguity of the provisions of the MDT, and continue to reformulate established mechanisms to address the alliance ambivalence.

#### D. THEORETICAL APPROACH OF THE ANALYSIS

In understanding the occurrences of conflicts in the international arena, various schools of thought compete to profess their expertise. Numerous published academic works on the formation and management of alliances influenced by threats exemplify the broad acceptance of the study of alliance. However, the abundance of scholarly materials on the study of alliances does not guarantee that a single grand alliance theory exists to explain the phenomenon comprehensively. Nonetheless, some literature is worthy of scrutiny.

When is an alliance an alliance? In his article, “The Concept of Alliance,” Stefan Bergsmann came up with a unique definition of the alliance “as an explicit agreement among states in the realm of national security in which the partners promise mutual assistance in the form of a substantial contribution of resources in the case of a certain contingency the arising of which is uncertain.”<sup>10</sup> This context highlights the core elements of military alliances; it provides a definition and limitation of an alliance. Nevertheless, the central question of how alliances are formed and managed remains unanswered.

Alliance formation happens when states view the world as anarchic. States join alliances to mitigate or balance a threatening power in order to survive. States react to the presence of existential threats that influence them to join or form alliances. In *Politics Among Nations*, Hans J. Morgenthau asserts that in the international politics, the struggle for power dictates the behavior of states.<sup>11</sup> In power politics, the world is anarchic in nature, and what matters most is the survival of the state.<sup>12</sup> This assertion has become a central paradigm among the circles of international relations theorists and policy makers. The popularity of the theory surged when the United States applied the containment strategy, a practical application of the framework of realism, against the Soviet Union

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<sup>10</sup> Stefan Bergsmann, “The Concept of Military Alliance,” in *Small States and Alliances*, eds. Erich Reiter and Heinz Gärtner, 2001 ed., Vol. V (Heidelberg, Germany: Physica-Verlag Heidelberg, 2001), 29.

<sup>11</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, Kenneth W. Thompson, and W. David Clinton, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 7th ed., rev. by Kenneth W. Thompson and W. David Clinton ed. (Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2006), 703.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

during the Cold War.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, in *Theory of International Politics*, Kenneth Waltz stipulates that the determinant of the behaviors of states depends on the structure of the international system.<sup>14</sup> He explains that the global structure influences the behavior of the states, not the will of the people. In this case, the state action and the global structure continue to complement each other in shaping the international system that sways the formation and management of alliances. In addition, in *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, John J. Mearsheimer advances the idea that the constant interactions of security and power between strategic states promote competition purposely to strengthen their relative power.<sup>15</sup> States continue to strengthen themselves, even in the absence of a direct threat, to satisfy their insecurity with other states within the international system. To maintain the status quo in the anarchic world, states focus their respective priorities to counter the threats of other states, which in turn compel them to join the alliance.

In the *Origins of Alliances*, Stephen M. Walt provides a better explanation of how threat induces the formation of the alliance and on how states respond to threats. He presents the balance of threat theory, a different perspective in the creation and management of alliances wherein he argues that the dynamics between threats and the responses of affected states are the primary factors in this occurrence. In laying out his theory, Walt defines alliance as security collaboration between two or more sovereign states in a formal or informal manner in which they undertake some level of obligation and in which reciprocity of benefits exists for both parties; the failure to honor the agreement or severing the relationship even with the existence of compensation would entail a certain cost.<sup>16</sup> In this case, alliance formation and management comprise the sum of interacting external factors and internal undertakings between parties in agreement.

Walt asserts that alliance formation predominantly occurs as a result of states balancing against threats, and not by the reason of balancing of power; in which states

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<sup>13</sup> Brian A. Keaney, "The Realism of Hans Morgenthau" (master's thesis, University of South Florida), 1–81.

<sup>14</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill, 1979).

<sup>15</sup> John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton, 2001), 555.

<sup>16</sup> Stephen M. Walt, "Exploring Alliance Formation," in *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987e), 1.

choose allies because of the gravity of threat posed by another state, regardless of the adversary state's current power status.<sup>17</sup> This occurrence is merited to the point that more states tend to balance rather than to bandwagon against a threatening state, and bandwagoning cases are manifested only by weak and isolated states.<sup>18</sup> In addition, the influence of ideological distinction as a factor in alliance formation declines as the level of threat increases; however, the potency of ideological cohesion increases when the level of security is high or there exists a strengthening interdependence between the ideological factors and security concerns.<sup>19</sup>

Walt clarifies the significance of the balance of threat theory over the balance of power theory, citing that it is a refinement of Morgenthau's traditional balance of power theory.<sup>20</sup> Walt asserts that the balance of threat theory subsumes the balance of power theory for "it provides greater explanatory power with equal parsimony."<sup>21</sup> The balance of threat theory validates the formation of a more powerful alliance in response to a threatening power and with the intention to balance it. Moreover, the theory explains the formation of the alliance as a reaction to the influence of regional dynamics and not on the shift in the global balance of power. He clarifies the balance of threat theory as a phenomenon of alliance where states ally to balance against threat rather than based on power.<sup>22</sup> As he explains, states tend to balance against the states that pose the greatest threat, irrespective of the power factor.<sup>23</sup> He explains that in the balance of power theory states form an alliance due to imbalance of power, while in the balance of threat theory states react because of an inequity of threat, which drives them to form alliances or upgrade their capacity to reduce vulnerability.<sup>24</sup> In addition, he asserts that this theory

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<sup>17</sup> Stephen M. Walt, "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power," in *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987d), 263.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 263.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

explains the formation of alliances depending on the sources and degree of threat factor. Threat originates from different sources such as the aggregate power, geographic proximity, greater offensive capability, and superior aggressive intentions.<sup>25</sup> These sources have a relative impact on a state's decision in forming or joining alliances.<sup>26</sup> Through the balance of threat theory, Walt presents the principles of bandwagoning and balancing from the works of Kenneth Waltz in *Theory of International Politics*, in which he gives credit to Stephen Van Evera.<sup>27</sup> In addition, Walt cites Arnold Wolfers, who uses the same terminology in his balance of power theory in his "Theory and Practice" essay.<sup>28</sup>

Walt makes several assertions to explain his balance of threat theory. In his first assertion, Walt stipulates that in response to the threat, states commit to alliances by either balancing or bandwagoning.<sup>29</sup> On balancing, a state facing an external threat will ally with other states to defy the hostile state.<sup>30</sup> In the aspect of bandwagoning, he asserts that states confronting a foreign threat will align with the most menacing state. In either case, a state's alignment depends on the following characteristics of a threatening state: 1) a greater aggregate power; 2) close geographical proximity; 3) greater offensive capabilities; and 4) aggressive intentions.<sup>31</sup> In addition, a balancing alliance formed in wartime conditions will dissolve when the aggressor is defeated, while alliance with the bandwagon to oppose a threat normally disbands when the threat becomes serious.<sup>32</sup> Walt concludes that balancing is more common than bandwagoning.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Stephen M. Walt, "Balancing and Bandwagoning," in *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987a), 147.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 147–148.

<sup>27</sup> Stephen M. Walt, "Explaining Alliance Formation," in *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987b), 17.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 21–28.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 32–33.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 33.



Second, he asserts that another possible reason for states to form an alliance is ideology. Drawing from Morgenthau's definition of ideological solidarity, Walt asserts that states that share political, cultural, or other traits are likely to become allied and influence the formation of the alliance as a response to external threats.<sup>34</sup> The alignment of states with the same ideology 1) advances the defense of respective political principles; 2) alleviates mutual fear among members; 3) enhances the weak state's legitimacy elevated by its alliance with a large and popular movement; and 4) the ideology prescribes alignment.<sup>35</sup>

Third, Walt argues that foreign aid in the form of economic and military assistance contributes to alliance formation.<sup>36</sup> The act of providing support demonstrates benevolence that suggests a sense of gratitude or dependency on the recipient. Foreign aid is a unique type of balancing behavior, and it can serve as a form of control by the donor over the recipient.<sup>37</sup> It serves as an instrument of statecraft and diplomacy that works both ways.

Finally, the effects of transnational penetration, or in Walt's definition, the intervention, and manipulation of one state in another state's domestic political system, could result in alliance formation.<sup>38</sup> Through deception and influence, foreign governments manipulate the creation of alliances with targeted states. The penetration's applicability is more efficient to an open-type society than a closed-type society. Moreover, the degree of accessibility of the state's political system dictates the level of probability of the alliance formation.

Walt concludes that the balance of threat theory subsumes the balance of power theory, ideological solidarity, foreign aid, and penetration in the formation and

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 34–35.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Stephen M. Walt, "The Instrument of Alliance: Aid and Penetration," in *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987c), 242.

management of the alliance.<sup>39</sup> He particularly states three main points in the conception and management of the alliance. First, where balancing is more common than bandwagoning, states form alliances to balance against potential threats rather than bandwagoning with the threat source.<sup>40</sup> Threat is the primary factor in the formation of an alliance where the threat level is governed by the interrelated factors of supremacy, proximity, capability, and intention of the threatening state. Second, the ideological solidarity has less influence in the alliance formation and acts as a susceptible factor in the dissolution of the alliance when subjected to a disinformation action or challenged by a significant level of threat.<sup>41</sup> In terms of alliance management, the ideological factor generates a possible atmosphere of discord rather than harmony if the member-states involved feel unsecured, when sovereignty is sacrificed, and when the presence of a divergent ideology creates a dominant menace to legitimacy. Third, foreign aid and penetration as instruments in the formation of an alliance are weak elements, specifically in the absence of a common interest.<sup>42</sup> Foreign aid in the form of economic and military assistance serves as a diplomatic instrument but fails in the absence of compatible political goals, even with the presence of shared interests.<sup>43</sup> However, it tends to increase the level of efficiency of existing alliance because it complements their aggregate power. Like in the case of penetration, foreign aid does not assure the creation of a reliable ally. Likewise, penetration is a weak determinant of alliance formation since its impact is hard to measure, and the absence of motives for the alignment adds to the dilemma.

Walt's balance of threat theory is the most viable framework of analysis in determining the role of threat in the dynamics of the Philippine-U.S. alliance. Through this theory, various threats are analyzed regarding how it influences the formation and management of the contemporary Philippine-U.S. alliance. This theory relates to this study, since threats are the primary movers of the Philippine-U.S. alliance. In addition,

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<sup>39</sup> Walt, *Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power*, 262–286.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 263.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 266–267.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 268–269.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

the threats affecting the alliance are confined within the scope of national and regional level.

## **E. THESIS METHODOLOGY AND ORGANIZATION**

The long-standing partnership between the Philippines and United States does not explicitly measure the actual status of the alliance. However, its history is a living testament of its dynamics. Imprinted in the alliance history, are significant occurrences that show its character. History shows the gaps that concerned parties must address to maximize the full potential of the alliance. Taking a cue from history provides a critical guide to decision makers, specifically politicians and staff that formulate and implement policies and strategies.<sup>44</sup> Hence, this thesis will review the evolution of Philippine-United States alliance in a historical context to determine the role of threat in the Philippine-U.S. alliance. Furthermore, the analysis will find disconnecting factors affecting the alliance. The overall approach of this study is an analytical and logical narrative of the Philippine and United States history covering the period from the inception of the first Philippine-U.S. military partnership to the present day alliance. To recognize gaps and explain relevant issues, this study will present and analyze empirical evidence based on previously published researches and publications. In this study, the author will use the three main points of Stephen Walt's balance of threat theory to frame and analyze the Philippine-U.S. alliance formation and management.

The study is presented in four parts. Chapter II highlights the pre-alliance events between the Philippines and the United States. It focuses on the foundation and development of the Philippine-U.S. military relationship from the Spanish-American War to the end of World War II. This chapter highlights the role of threat and the effect of the American colonization to the development of the Philippines and U.S. relations. Chapter III presents the development and formalization of the military partnership into an alliance. This section shows the ebbs and flows of the alliance that led to its formalization, its consequential nadir, and revitalization. The chapter shows the

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<sup>44</sup> Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May, *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision Makers* (New York; London: Free Press; Collier Macmillan, 1986), 329.

interaction of threats and alliance mechanism in shaping the contemporary alliance. Chapter IV presents the contemporary security challenges and opportunities of the alliance. This part highlights the role of varied existential threats that are presently challenging the alliance. It reveals the role of the shared and unshared existential threat in the dynamics of the alliance. It also reveals the interaction of threat and the alliance treaty and mechanisms affecting the Philippine-U.S. alliance. Chapter V presents the conclusion and recommendation of the study. It concludes that the threat impacts the Philippine-U.S. alliance in two ways. It either strengthens or weakens the alliance. Threats serve as a catalyst in the organization, development, waning, and revitalization of the contemporary alliance. This study recommends that to strengthen the alliance, the gap in the alliance threat assessment must be resolved between the representatives of the Philippines and the United States, and a further study on how to resolve the ambiguity of the 1951 MDT is suggested.

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## **II. THE FOUNDATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE PHILIPPINE AND UNITED STATES MILITARY PARTNERSHIP**

This chapter highlights the pre-alliance events between the Philippines and the United States. It focuses on the foundation and development of the Philippine-U.S. military relationship from the Spanish-American War towards the end of World War II. If we are to use Walt's definition of what constitutes an alliance, then this period is irrelevant since he defines alliance as an informal or formal agreement between two sovereign states. During this period, the Philippines was a colony of Spain, and subsequently transferred to the Americans after the Spanish-American War. However, it is necessary to include this section because it highlights several main points of Walt's balance of threat theory. From the start, the Philippines and the U.S. manifested alliance-like activities. This chapter discusses the Philippines and U.S. manifestations of the balance of threat theory central points.

### **A. THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR IN THE PHILIPPINES**

The Philippines and the United States alliance are rooted deeply in history. Since the inception of the Philippine-U.S. Alliance, the two nations cooperated in promoting their strategic interests especially in confronting common threats. The foundation of the alliance spans for centuries that culminated during the Spanish-American War of 1898.

For almost 350 years, the Philippines remained under Spain's colonial rule. Spain colonized the Philippines in 1565 with the intent to impose Spanish domination and exploit the Philippines' vast natural resources for the benefit of the Spanish crown.<sup>45</sup> Under the Spanish control, the Filipino people suffered forced conscription, forced labor, the concentration of wealth among the elite, and the concentration of power among priests and their authority over agriculture interests.<sup>46</sup> The Spanish colonizers' harsh rule and unfair practices roused the sense of nationalism of the Filipino people. The Filipinos'

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<sup>45</sup> Teodoro A. Agoncillo, *History of the Filipino People*, 8th ed. (Quezon City, Philippines: Garotech, 1990), 39.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 45–60, 71–79.

clamor for freedom and independence led to numerous historical rebellions against the oppressive Spanish authorities in the Philippines.<sup>47</sup>

In the latter part of 1897, the natives' rebellion in Cuba strained diplomatic relations between the United States and Spain. The Cuban rebellion prejudiced American interests and endangered American residents in that island.<sup>48</sup> The mysterious sinking of the *USS Maine*, an American ship docked in Cuba, aggravated the situation. It provided President William McKinley and the U.S. Congress reasons for an American intervention in Cuban affairs.<sup>49</sup> On April 23, 1898, Spain and the United States began withdrawing their diplomatic representatives, and a war broke out between the two nations.<sup>50</sup> Under the Spanish rule, the Philippines became a legitimate target for American conquest. The Spanish-American War presented an opportunity for the Filipinos to pursue their quest for independence from the clutches of Spain. The Filipinos would capitalize the war and use America as an ally to intensify the ongoing insurrection against Spain. Similarly, Americans would solicit military cooperation with the Filipino revolutionaries against the Spanish forces in the Philippines.

At the outset of the Spanish-American War, American diplomats started to engage with Filipino revolutionary leaders. Spencer Pratt, the American consul in Singapore, initiated contact with the Filipino revolutionary leader Emilio Aguinaldo.<sup>51</sup> Consul Pratt urged Aguinaldo to resume hostilities against the Spaniards, and in return, the United States would recognize the independence of the Philippines.<sup>52</sup> However, the agreement remains undocumented since Mr. Pratt guaranteed Aguinaldo that his word and that of Commodore George Dewey, Commander of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet, "constitute a solemn

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<sup>47</sup> Uldarico S. Baclagon, "Resistance Against Spanish Conquest," in *Military History of the Philippines* (Manila, Philippines: St. Mary's Publishing, 1975c), 1–15.

<sup>48</sup> Uldarico S. Baclagon, "American Occupation of the Philippines," in *Military History of the Philippines* (Manila, Philippines: St. Mary's Publishing, 1975a), 43.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

pledge that their verbal promises and assurances would be fulfilled to the letter.”<sup>53</sup> With this promise, Aguinaldo conferred with Rounseville Wildman, the American Consul-General in Hong Kong, about proceeding with the procurement and delivery of arms and ammunitions worth PHP 57,000 in the Philippines.<sup>54</sup> Commodore Dewey conferred an arrival honor to Aguinaldo upon his arrival in the Philippines and assured him that the United States recognizes the independence of the Philippines.<sup>55</sup> The promised U.S. partnership and assurance of independence became a rallying point for the Filipinos in the intensified armed struggle against the Spaniards. However, the Americans not only planned for a military intervention in the Philippines; the imperialistic propensities of the Americans intensified their interest to colonize the Philippines.<sup>56</sup>

Theodore Roosevelt, the acting secretary of the U.S. Navy, envisioned the expansion of American influence in the Asia-Pacific region. The United States lacked the colonial presence overseas, specifically in the Southeast Asian region. Roosevelt anticipated the Spanish-American war as an opportunity to seize Spanish colonies, particularly the Philippine Island. Motivated by the thoughts and imperialistic ambitions of Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan and Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, and reinforced by Commodore Dewey’s aggressive stance, Roosevelt planned the American takeover by attacking Manila.<sup>57</sup> The imminence of war with Spain prompted the United States to prepare contingency plans for war with Spain’s forces in the Philippines. The United States Asiatic Fleet under Commodore Dewey to prepare for the planned offensive action against the Spanish Forces in the Philippines deployed in Hong Kong.

On May 1, 1898, the Battle of Manila Bay between the American armada and the Spanish Fleet commenced.<sup>58</sup> The antiquated Spanish fleet was easily defeated with

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Cesar P. Pobre, “The Philippine Revolution,” in *History of the Armed Forces of the Filipino People* (Quezon City, Philippines: New Day Publishers, 2000e), 30.

<sup>55</sup> Baclagon, *American Occupation of the Philippines*, 48.

<sup>56</sup> Cesar P. Pobre, “The Philippine-American War,” in *History of the Armed Forces of the Filipino People* (Quezon City, Philippines: New Day Publishing, 2000f), 40.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>58</sup> Baclagon, *American Occupation of the Philippines*, 45.



virtually no damage to the American fleet. Meanwhile, the Filipino insurgents had been victorious in their heightened land offensives that had become a nationwide general uprising against the Spaniards.<sup>59</sup> The Spanish fleet defeat in Manila Bay and the Filipino revolutionary's effective control of most major cities and towns diminished the Spanish domination of the Philippines. For the time being, officials in Washington sent a 5,000 strong expeditionary force under General Wesley E Merritt on June 30, 1898, aimed to establish an effective control of Manila and in furtherance of the proposed colonization of the Philippines.<sup>60</sup>

Spain's major setback in the Battle of Manila Bay and Cuba, along with its losing the battle with the Filipino revolutionaries, prompted the Spanish to transfer the colonial government in the Philippines to the Americans.<sup>61</sup> The United States and Spain agreed to a truce stipulating that the United States would retain Manila City and Manila Bay and that a separate peace treaty would decide the fate of the Philippine archipelago.<sup>62</sup> In the name of honor and chivalry, through a Belgian consul, the Spaniards facilitated for a 'mock' battle with the U.S. forces before their surrender.<sup>63</sup> The staged surrender of Manila by the Spaniards put the Americans in full control of the city, which sidelined the Filipino armed endeavors.<sup>64</sup>

On December 10, 1898, Spain and the U.S. delegates signed the Treaty of Paris, ceded the Philippines, and transferred the colonial power of Spain to the United States after paying \$20,000,000, without the knowledge of the Filipinos' leaders.<sup>65</sup> The treaty

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Gregorio F. Zaide, *The Philippine Revolution* (Manila, Philippines: The Modern Book Co., 1968), 188–189.

<sup>61</sup> Pobre, *The Philippine-American War*, 41.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Baclagon, *American Occupation of the Philippines*, 57.

<sup>64</sup> Pobre, *The Philippine-American War*, 41.

<sup>65</sup> Cynthia L. Marasigan, "Between the Devil and the Deep Sea: Ambivalence, Violence, and African American Soldiers in the Philippine-American War and its Aftermath" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan), 12.

officially ended the Spanish-American War, but it would serve as a fuse for the bloody Philippine-American War.<sup>66</sup>

## **B. THE PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN WAR AND THE AMERICAN COLONIZATION OF THE PHILIPPINES**

The U.S. action to colonize the Philippines brought enmity between the former partners igniting the Philippine-American War in 1899. On February 4, 1899, the war officially began when U.S. soldiers shot a Filipino soldier in Manila.<sup>67</sup> The two forces fought conventionally, and shifted to guerrilla warfare in the final days of the war. The Filipinos waged conventional warfare in an effort to highlight its legitimacy, self-governance, and world acceptance.<sup>68</sup> The U.S. forces dominated the battlefield in the realm of conventional warfare pitting superior firepower, training and ample logistics against the superiority in numbers and ferocity of the Filipinos.<sup>69</sup> The U.S. forces believed that the capture of Emilio Aguinaldo, the Filipino resistance leader, and the U.S. control of most strategic areas in the Philippines signified that the war had ended.<sup>70</sup> However, the decentralized Filipino forces waged a bloody and costly guerilla war that would obligate the United States to deploy 69,420 troops in 1900.<sup>71</sup> The onset of the guerilla war marked the increased brutality against the Filipinos attributed to the U.S. battle tactics, re-concentration policy, and the use of indigenous scouts to suppress the Filipino resistance.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> David Silbey, *A War of Frontier and Empire: The Philippine-American War, 1899–1902* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007), 40–59.

<sup>67</sup> Benito J. Legarda and Ina Bulatao, *The Hills of Sampaloc: The Opening Actions of the Philippine-American War, February 4–5, 1899* (Makati City, Philippines: Bookmark, 2001), 40–59.

<sup>68</sup> Carlos Quirino, *Filipinos at War* (Manila, Philippines: Vera-Reyes, 1981), 158.

<sup>69</sup> Uldarico S. Baclagon, “The Filipino-American War,” in *Military History of the Philippines* (Manila, Philippines: St. Mary’s Publication, 1975b), 85.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Pobre, *The Philippine-American War*, 66–69.

The prominence of the U.S. forces' brutality impelled President McKinley's proclamation of the "benevolent assimilation."<sup>73</sup> In an effort to tone down the massive military subjugation of the Philippines, he stated that the primary aim of the United States was to "win the confidence, respect, and affection of the Filipinos by guaranteeing their rights and liberties," and "by substituting the mild sway of justice and right for arbitrary rule."<sup>74</sup> However, the action was an attempt to appease the U.S. domestic audience and explain the propensity of American imperialism.<sup>75</sup> Nonetheless, the strategy did not diminish the atrocities committed by the warring parties during the war. The war was brutal and bloody, and lasted for three years incurring over 4,200 American casualties, over 20,000 Filipino combatants, and as many as 250,000 Filipino civilians deaths caused by other forms of violence, war-related diseases, and famine.<sup>76</sup>

Remarkably, the end of the war on July 4, 1902, and the subsequent American colonization of the Philippines, introduced a new perspective to the Filipinos. The U.S. leadership application of the policy of attraction introduced self-governance, social reforms, and implementation of economic development to the Filipino people creating an environment of cooperation and independence. Interestingly, the U.S. Army played a vital role in the Philippines' state building. It was the principal organization instrumental in the creation and development of public institutions.<sup>77</sup> The U.S. Army actively involved itself in the counterinsurgency operations and the governance of the established civil authority and institutions.<sup>78</sup> As such, the U.S. Army established the Philippine Scouts (PS) as the U.S. colonial army that served in the counterinsurgency operations.<sup>79</sup> The PS

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<sup>73</sup> Onofre Dizon Corpuz, *The Roots of the Filipino Nation*, Vol. 2 (Diliman, Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 2006), 373.

<sup>74</sup> Pobre, *The Philippine-American War*, 44.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Paul A. Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, & the Philippines* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 157.

<sup>77</sup> Ian C. Rice, "United States Army State Building: New Enterprise Or Timeless Mission" (Unpublished paper, UCLA Political Science Department).

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Jim R. Woolard, *The Philippine Scouts: The Development of America's Colonial Army* (Columbus: Ohio State University, 1975), 8–9.

would serve as the indigenous Territorial Army during the Philippine Autonomy and the Commonwealth period.

On August 29, 1916, the U.S. Congress enacted the Philippine Autonomy Act or the Jones Law of 1916 that declared the speedy granting of the Philippine Independence and the hastening the of the Filipino control of the Philippines.<sup>80</sup> The U.S. Congress enactment of the Tydings-McDuffie Act on March 24, 1934, created the Philippine Commonwealth Government in a semi-autonomous rule for ten years in preparation for the independence.<sup>81</sup> It brought forth the professionalization of the Filipino soldiers and the organization of the Philippine Army.<sup>82</sup> In addition, the act officially authorized the deployment of U.S. personnel in the Philippines, the U.S. maintenance of sovereignty of its military Bases, and the right to represent the Philippines in foreign affairs.<sup>83</sup>

### **C. THE WORLD WAR II CHALLENGE**

The rise of Japan in the early 1930s and 1940s, and its growing power and influence in global affairs, termed “Japanese Monroeism,” expanded its influence and territorial claim over Korea, Manchuria, and Vietnam.<sup>84</sup> This event prompted President Franklin Roosevelt to create the United States Armed Forces in the Far East (USAFFE). General Douglas MacArthur, the head of the USAFFE, pushed for the strengthening of the Philippine Defense System and conceptualized the War Plan “Orange” as the external security plan.<sup>85</sup> However, the defense preparation was plagued with complications

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<sup>80</sup> Cesar P. Pobre, “Continuation of the Struggle for Independence,” in *History of the Armed Forces of the Filipino People* (Quezon City, Philippines: New Day Publishers, 2000a), 120–121.

<sup>81</sup> Philippines, Tydings-McDuffie Law, being Public Act no. 127 of the United States Congress, Approved March 24, 1934. Including Amendments to the Ordinance Appended to the Constitution of the Philippines Proposed by the National Assembly, Including the Act of Congress of the United States of August 7, 1939 (Manila, Philippines: Bureau of Print, 1940).

<sup>82</sup> Pobre, “Continuation of the Struggle for Independence,” 119–165.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Gerald K. Haines, *Monroeism, Regionalism and the Quest for Security : A Comparison of the United States Position in the Western Hemisphere with Japanese and German Regional Policies, 1932 to 1942*, Vol. 2 (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1973), 636.; Seiji G. Hishida, *The International Position of Japan as a Great Power* (New York: AMS Press, 1968), 289.

<sup>85</sup> Cesar P. Pobre, “Preparations for Philippine Defense,” in *History of the Armed Forces of the Filipino People* (Quezon City, Philippines: New day Publishers, 2000g), 167.

attributed to former military policies and political interventions. For example, the 1921 Washington Naval Conference stipulated the prohibition of upgrading Philippine fortifications and modernization of its army.<sup>86</sup> The founding of the League of Nations in World War I and the Washington Naval Conference created a false belief that the presence of peace institutions and mechanisms could ensure the status quo in the balance of power. These mechanisms were widely believed as deterrence for nations to commits acts of foreign aggression.<sup>87</sup> The Philippine Resident Commissioners to the United States, Isauro Gabaldon and Pedro Guevarra, favored Woodrow Wilson's principle of idealism believing that the League of the Nations promise of collective security would spare the Philippines from foreign invasion. Philippine Senator Pedro de la Llana dissented asserting his realpolitik's stance that the Philippines would eventually tangle with the complexity of international affairs, because of the absence of permanent security for peace among nations.<sup>88</sup> Furthermore, the non-release of the Philippines' \$50 Million gold devaluation and sugar tax fund by the U.S. government, affected the Philippines' pursuit of defense capability upgrade and Philippine Army modernization.<sup>89</sup>

On December 8, 1941, the Japanese Imperial Army invaded the Philippines and challenged the U.S.-Philippine defenses. In a matter of time, the Philippines capitulated to the might of the Japanese war machine and declared Manila as an open city. The surrender of the USAFFE in Bataan signaled the Japanese Imperial Army victory and control of the whole Philippine Archipelago. The Filipino Resistance fighters and the remnants of the USAFFE combined forces conducted guerilla warfare against the Japanese. The return of MacArthur conventional forces assisted by the guerillas led to the Japanese defeat and liberation of the Philippines on July 5, 1945.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Suzanne Carpenter, "Towards the Development of Philippine National Security Capability, 1920–1940, with Special Reference to the Commonwealth Period" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1976).

<sup>88</sup> Marcelo L. Factora, "Thirtieth Anniversary of the UP-DSMT," *Philippine Free Press*, March 29, 1952, 10.

<sup>89</sup> Cesar P. Pobre, "More Defense Preparations," in *History of the Armed Forces of the Filipino People* (Quezon City, Philippines: New Day Publishers, 2000d), 265–267.

<sup>90</sup> Cesar P. Pobre, "Liberation of the Philippines," in *History of the Armed Forces of the Filipino People* (Quezon City, Philippines: New Day Publishers, 2000c), 350.

#### **D. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION**

The military relationship between the Philippines and the United States during the Spanish-American War does not merit an alliance. Per Walt's definition, an alliance should fall between a cooperation of two sovereign states, which were also supported by the definition of Bergsmann. However, this period manifested the characteristics of alliance formation in consonance with Walt's balance of threat theory's main points. Although the Philippines at this time were not a sovereign government, the Filipino revolutionary and the U.S. government mimicked alliance characteristics as described in Walt's theory. First, the Filipino revolutionaries co-opted with the U.S. forces and tried to balance against the Spanish forces. Second, the partnership manifested an informal alignment of ideology as demonstrated in their shared belief of democracy as both parties' advocated freedom and independence. Third, the two partners explored the exchange of resources to fight a common enemy. Last, the diplomats and the leaders exemplified Walt's premise on penetration of or access to the political system. Overall, the two forces manifested the characteristics of the state's desire of forming an alliance. The military cooperation during the American-Spanish War served as the foundation of the Philippine-U.S. military partnership. It challenged a common threat; however, the Philippines and the United States had unshared strategic interests. The Philippines regarded the military partnership with the United States as an opportunity to defeat the colonial power of Spain towards the achievement of the long-sought independence. Contrastingly, the U.S. intention was beyond defeating the Spanish forces in the Philippines. Its ultimate objective was to control the Philippines and revealed its propensity of imperialism towards the Asia-Pacific region.<sup>91</sup> The U.S. victory over Spain and the control of the Philippines established its foothold in the region that ensured its ability to pursue economic and geopolitical interest. Controlling the Philippines provided the United States a geopolitical advantage in its power projection and commercial trade in Asia. Notwithstanding the odds and unshared goals, the symbiotic relationship between the United States and the Philippines worked out in defeating a common threat, though distrust and rift in the pursuit of their respective interests existed. Thus, the first

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<sup>91</sup> Pobre, *The Philippine-American War*, 40.

Philippine-U.S. military partnership was a product of the two nations' exigency and motives of self-interests.

Walt's theory remains irrelevant in terms of his definition of the alliance during the Philippine-U.S. War and colonization period. Nonetheless, the Philippine-American War and the subsequent colonization of the Philippines primed the formation and management of a future alliance. The state-building policy of the United States in the Philippines was consistent with Walt's points about the importance of ideology, penetration, and foreign aid in the development of a future ally. The colonization period enhanced the democratization of the Philippines wherein the United States managed to inculcate the seed of democracy and steered the alignment of the Filipino people with the American ideology. The United States' military and politicians' engagement in the Philippines' state building slowly molded the Filipino society into the image of the Americans. The significant developments in this period enhanced the ideological alignment as well as the laying out of the foundation of a similar and accessible political system. The U.S. effort would prove fruitful in its future endeavor with the GPH. The U.S. inherent action to extend economic and military aid to its colony further develops the interdependence of both parties. All actions that the United States took during this period seem to point in the direction of creating a future ally that could assist and protect its interests.

The Philippine-American War and the subsequent American colonization of the Philippines provided vast opportunities to the Filipinos and the United States to advance military thinking. The war between the former partners provided an opportunity to test their respective combat capacity and resolve. It created opportunities to develop and refine doctrines and strategies that could withstand the ever-changing aspect of the warfare. The war served as a political instrument for the Filipinos to achieve legitimacy and independence. Moreover, it facilitated the remodeling of the warfare methodology in response to the disparity of force to maximize accessible resources. Evidently, the war sided with the better equipped, as well as the well-trained and more disciplined army; it revealed the disparity of combat capability of the two contending forces that measured

their respective combat value. However, the war proved costly to both sides in terms of loss of lives and properties and the extent of expenditures.

On the positive side, the U.S. introduction of the policy of benevolent assimilation won the hearts and minds of the Filipinos. It served as a foundation for the envisioned transformation of the Philippines into a nation-state. The United States molded the Philippines into its image invoking its ideals of freedom and democracy that helped foster their future relationship. In the military perspective, the U.S. military during this period epitomized its flexibility and significance as a pacifier, peacekeeper, and an essential element in nation building. Moreover, the U.S. ability to assimilate the indigenous forces as force multiplier benefited both parties. It transferred the U.S. Army's burden to fight a local war that elevated the effective morality of the war. The Philippine Scouts acting as the U.S. colonial army showed the development of military camaraderie between the United States and the Filipinos that proved invaluable in the conduct of joint military efforts.<sup>92</sup>

Finally, the American colonization in the Philippines advanced the U.S. national interest and its ultimate goal of achieving geopolitical interest in the Asia-Pacific region. The enactment of the Tydings-McDuffie Law ensured the continuous U.S. military presence in the Philippines that provided protection of its geopolitical and economic interests and maintained its foothold in the Asia-Pacific region. Similarly, the establishment of functioning U.S. civil and military institutions in the Philippines supported the U.S. government's drive for maritime dominance, increased economic influence, and market expansion in Asia for its rapidly growing capitalist system. However, the rise of Japan as a global power would challenge the U.S. presence in Asia.

In this pre-alliance period, the Philippines, as an understudy of the United States in governance, responded to balance with its mentor. The action aligns with Walt's point that states facing a foreign aggression will align together to oppose the states posing the threat. Since Japan was a powerful aggressor that posed the greatest threat, and in close

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<sup>92</sup> Woolard, *The Philippine Scouts: The Development of America's Colonial Army*, 3–7.; Charles H. Franklin and Army War College (U.S.), *History of the Philippine Scouts, 1899–1934* (Fort Humphreys, DC: Historical Section, Army War College, 1935), 8–9.



geographical proximity, made the Philippines align against it, which is consistent with the balance of threat theory. Japan's military might in the region exhibited a strong offensive capability which explains why the Philippines formed a defensive coalition with the United States. In addition, the U.S. establishment of shared ideology with the Philippines and its access to its political system contributed to the alignment. The substantial aid given by the United States to the Philippines before the outbreak of the war increased the likelihood of the alignment, the control of the United States in the Philippines and the manifestation of an alliance-like attitude between them.

World War II tested the foundation of the Philippines-U.S. military partnership as the two nations jointly confronted the threat of foreign invasion. The war revealed the partnership's strengths and vulnerabilities in confronting the threat. It uncovered the effect of the U.S. colonization and the Philippine Autonomy government's avocation in the development of the Philippine defense. Their unaligned strategic perspectives restricted the Philippine defense modernization. The two nations' opposing domestic and international concerns that included the maintenance of U.S. sovereignty over the Philippines, the upkeep of Philippine Commonwealth government's stability, and the international relations repercussion of a military buildup significantly influenced the degrading of the partnership's military capacity. A broad spectrum of political tensions between the United States and Philippine leaders affected the competence of the partnership to provide the necessary defense posture. The political rigidities overwhelmed the importance of forming a credible defense capability that could have elevated the partnership's potency. Moreover, the U.S. apprehensiveness and lack of trust with its counterpart degraded the planned robust defense capability buildup that could have developed the Philippines as a competent security partner. Strengthening the Philippines in the military aspect could have guaranteed the United States a capable strategic ally able to confront threats and secure shared strategic interests. Evidently, politics was a major factor in the changing aspects of the Philippine-U.S. military relations. The U.S. policy during the colonization period and the two nations' political power struggle shaped the Philippine military and the partnership's status.

Nevertheless, the war nurtured the deepening relationship of the Philippines and the United States. They fought a joint war for a shared cause until the fall of Bataan, and, thereafter in the form of an insurgency that ran until the return of General MacArthur late in 1944. The two nations manifested unequivocal traits of fortitude and resilience in times of adversity. The war validated the significance of a future alliance, specifically the ability of the member-states to cooperate and execute joint strategy to challenge a foreign aggression. The success of the Philippine-U.S. partnership in World War II enabled them to overcome significant trials and prepare them from the future challenges of the dynamics of post-World War II atmosphere. These underlying circumstances promoted the U.S. and the Philippines' action to forge a stronger alliance in preparation for the beginning of the Philippine Independence.

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### **III. THE FORMALIZATION AND BREAKDOWN OF THE PHILIPPINE-UNITED STATES ALLIANCE**

If we review the relevance of Walt's balance of threat theory in this chapter, it will show that it is applicable. During this period, the condition of the Philippine-U.S. relationship managed to achieve the conditions that Walt had set. This chapter narrates the forging of a formalized alliance between the Philippines and the United States. The role of threats and mechanisms are relevant in this chapter, because it shows how it influenced the dynamics of the Philippine-U.S. alliance by using Walt's theory as a guide.

#### **A. THE PHILIPPINE-U.S. ALLIANCE DURING THE COLD WAR**

The end of World War II marked the onset of the Cold War. It forced the two emerging superpowers—the United States and the Soviet Union—into an international power struggle for ideological, geopolitical, and economic expansion. The superpowers vied to influence war-ravaged nations to impose their respective ideologies and interests. As a result, a clash of ideologies occurred between U.S. capitalism and the Soviet Union's Communism in their quest for world domination.<sup>93</sup> Thus, the Cold War era began. Cold War is a term that describes the political and military relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union from post-World War II to the late 1980s. In the Asia-Pacific, the Southeast Asian region became a pivotal frontline of the Cold War geopolitics. The communist spread in the region affected China, Korea, and Vietnam, and other states. As a response, the United States established numerous bilateral alliances in the Asia-Pacific region. Its primary aim was to curtail the growing influence of the Soviet Union and deter the spread of Communism among Asian nations.

The Cold War period witnessed the birth of a new nation-state, the Philippines. On July 4, 1946, the United States granted the full independence of the Philippines.<sup>94</sup> The

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<sup>93</sup> Simon J. Ball, *The Cold War: An International History, 1947–1991*, illustrated, reprint ed. (London; New York: Arnold, 1998), 260.

<sup>94</sup> Roxanne Lynn Doty, "Foreign Policy as Social Construction: A Post-Positivist Analysis of US Counterinsurgency Policy in the Philippines," *International Studies Quarterly* 37, no. 3 (1993), 297–320.

young Philippine Republic built in the image of its colonizer adopted the western principles of democracy, and it remained the Asian state with the closest ties to the United States.<sup>95</sup> During the colonial period, the U.S. shaped the Philippines as a nation with shared principles and ideals that was keen to support U.S. foreign policy and interests.<sup>96</sup> Furthermore, the U.S. established mechanism to legalize its presence and maintain an individual level of sovereignty and control over the Philippines after its independence. For instance, the Treaty of General Relations and Protocol signed by the U.S. and the Philippines on July 4, 1946 established the new bilateral relationship between them, in which the military bases would play a vital role.<sup>97</sup> The treaty acknowledged the Philippine sovereignty and control of the whole archipelago excluding the U.S. military bases.<sup>98</sup> In addition, it authorized the U.S. to represent the foreign affairs of the Philippine as requested by the latter.<sup>99</sup> Thus, the treaty assured the U.S. a military foothold in the Philippines for its power projection, protection of interests, and containment policy in Southeast Asia. Similarly, on March 21, 1947, representatives from both nations signed the Philippine-U.S. Military Assistance Agreement (MAA) that enhances the development of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) capability through U.S. assistance. It created the Joint United States Military Advisory Group (JUSMAG) to advise and train the AFP and paved the way for the authorized handover of military war equipment and logistics.<sup>100</sup> For the Philippines, the treaty assured a U.S. security umbrella from external aggression. Furthermore, it provided vital military aid and economic benefits. Hence, the improved Philippine-U.S. alliance provided the war-

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<sup>95</sup> Michael B. Yahuda, "The Impact of the Cold War and the Struggles for Independence," in *The International Politics of the Asia-Pacific*, 2nd and rev. ed. (London; New York: Routledge Curzon, 2004), 30.

<sup>96</sup> Stanley Karnow, *In our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines* (New York: Random House, 1989), 494.

<sup>97</sup> United States, Philippines and Treaties, General Relations : Treaty Between the United States of America and Philippines and Protocol, Signed at Manila July 4, 1946, and Interim Agreement Effectuated by Exchange of Notes, Signed at Manila July 10 and 12, 1946, Effective July 4, 1946. Uniform Title: Treaties, Etc. (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 1947).

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>100</sup> Ronald E. Dolan, "Philippines: A Country Study," Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1993.

ravaged Philippines an opportunity to focus on the alleviation of domestic social problem, focused counterinsurgency operations, and postwar reconstruction. In brief, both nations benefitted from these agreements, and strengthened the Philippine-U.S. alliance during the Cold War.

The Cold War enhanced the primacy of the Philippine-U.S. alliance. The two nations' common strategic interests, democratic ideals, and shared threats compelled them to formalize a bilateral security alliance. As a U.S. stronghold in Southeast Asia, the Philippines proved to be a crucial factor in the U.S. foreign policy of "containment" during the cold war. The containment was a U.S. policy projected for the Soviet Union during the post-World War II to suppress its influence in reshaping the post-war international order.<sup>101</sup> The wide and rapid spread of the communist insurgency throughout Southeast Asia caused alarm among western democratic nations. The successful communist revolution in China in 1949 and the succeeding communist-inspired South Korean War (1950–1953) and the Vietnam War (1965–1975) obliged the U.S. to reinforce its relationship with the Philippines for it served as a part of the U.S. strategic defense perimeter in the Pacific.<sup>102</sup> In addition, the Cold War underscored a new kind of strategy—a proxy war between the two superpowers fought by their client states—and the Philippines served as a U.S. surrogate state.<sup>103</sup> The Philippine-U.S. bilateral alliance proved crucial in the U.S. containment policy in the Asia-Pacific region.

The U.S. and the Republic of the Philippines' commitment for enhanced security cooperation led to the conceptualization of the 1951 MDT and the creation of a military-to-military engagement framework—the 1958 RP-U.S. Mutual defense Board (MDB). On August 30, 1951, Philippine and U.S. representatives signed the MDT in Washington, D.C., that formalized the Philippine-U.S. bilateral alliance.<sup>104</sup> The treaty stipulated the

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<sup>101</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, "Containment before in Kennan," in *Strategies of Containment, A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 4.

<sup>102</sup> Yahuda, *The Impact of the Cold War and the Struggles for Independence*, 30.

<sup>103</sup> Ball, *The Cold War: An International History, 1947–1991*, 260.

<sup>104</sup> United States, Philippines, and Treaties, Mutual Defense Treaty, between the United States of America and the Republic of the Philippines Signed at Washington, August 30, 1951 ... Proclaimed by the President of the United States of America, September 15, 1962, Entered into Force August 27, 1952. Uniform Title: Treaties, Etc. (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 1953), 8.

Philippines and U.S. mutual support in case of an external attack to their respective territories and troops.<sup>105</sup> It outlined that the U.S. and the Philippines separately and jointly by their own initiative and mutual support maintained and developed their individual and collective capacity to thwart armed foreign state aggression.<sup>106</sup> Complementing the MDT, the MDB served as a mechanism to enhance the shared security defense obligation of both nations that oversees the planning and implementation of joint military activities. The MDB activities encompassed the development of Philippine external defenses to mitigate any foreign aggression. The institutionalization of the Philippine-U.S. alliance security mechanisms enhanced the two nations' ability to confront the Cold War period's internal and external security challenges. However, the MDT provision disconnected the Philippine and U.S. leaders in what they called "security-sovereignty dilemma."<sup>107</sup> The dilemma referred to the vague and informal assurance of the United States action that in case a foreign aggressor attack the Philippines, the U.S. would immediately come to its aid.<sup>108</sup> Incorporated in the MDT in August 1951, article IV of the treaty stated "each party recognizes that an armed attack in the Pacific area, or either of the parties would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common dangers in accordance with its constitutional process."<sup>109</sup> However, the Filipinos remain disgruntled with the article, and several attempts to resolve the dilemma occurred between July 1953 and August 1965. However, after four negotiations over a 12-year span, the Philippine sovereignty and security issue, defined in the MDT, remains vague.<sup>110</sup>

At the height of the Cold War, an internal communist movement menaced the Philippines. The resurgence of the communist-inspired *Hukbong Bayan Laban Sa Hapon* (HUKBALAHAP) insurgency in 1946, originally against the Japanese Imperial Army,

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Joseph W. Dodd, "Revision of the 1947 Agreement," in *Criminal Jurisdiction Under the United States-Philippine Military Bases Agreement* (The Hague, Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff, 1968), 83.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

challenged the stability of the Philippines.<sup>111</sup> In 1949, the HUKBALAHAP changed its name to *Hukbong Mapagpalaya Sa Bayan* (HMB), but was still widely known as the HUK.<sup>112</sup> The Huk Communist Insurgency measured the alliance ability to curtail an internal threat. In a short period, the insurgency ended through the combined approach of the Philippines and the United States forces.<sup>113</sup> The combined Philippine-U.S. advisory groups designed workable counterinsurgency strategies (COIN) to suppress the HUK rebellion.<sup>114</sup> American interventionism was one of the critical factors that contributed to the success of the counterinsurgency campaign against the Huk.<sup>115</sup> The U.S. military aid to the AFP proved crucial to the execution of the COIN strategy.<sup>116</sup> In a span of five-years, the AFP defeated the Huk Communist Insurgency without the U.S. Armed Forces direct intervention.<sup>117</sup> The non-involvement of the U.S. Armed forces in the COIN operations advanced the GPH's legitimacy and highlighted the professionalism of its armed forces in handling internal threats. The defeat of the Huks exemplified the efficacy of the alliance execution of a joint approach without jeopardizing the sovereignty of the host nation. Thus, the action of the alliance averred the exploitation of sensitive issues that may undermine the alliance.

The advent of the new communist insurgency in 1968 under the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA) challenged the alliance in a peculiar manner. The globalization in the 1960s and its consequential effect served as a rallying

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<sup>111</sup> Greenberg termed the Hukbong Bayan Laban sa Hapon as the "Anti-Japanese Army." In my opinion, the more accurate translation is "People's Anti-Japanese Army." Lawrence M. Greenberg, Center of Military History and Analysis Branch, *The Hukbalahap Insurrection: A Case Study of a Successful Anti-Insurgency Operation in the Philippines, 1946–1955* (Washington, DC: Analysis Branch, U.S. Army Center of Military History, U.S. GPO, 1987), 15; Robert Ross Smith, "The Hukbalahap Insurgency," *Military Review* 45, no. 6 (1965): 35–42.

<sup>112</sup> The Hukbong Mapagpalaya Sa Bayan as translated in English means "The People's Liberation Army." Cesar P. Pobre, "Internal Security and Antidissident Campaign," in *History of the Armed Forces of the Filipino People* (Quezon City, Philippines: New Day Publishers, 2000b), 396.

<sup>113</sup> Greenberg, Center of Military History and Analysis Branch, *The Hukbalahap Insurrection: A Case Study of a Successful Anti-Insurgency Operation in the Philippines, 1946–1955*, 7–8.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 95–96.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 75–99.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.



point for the new insurgency. The insurgents capitalized on the globalization cause and effect on social conditions that undermine the relevancy of existing geographic boundaries. In particular, the progressive left and the nationalists used the socio-political and economic issues to pursue their strategic goal of overthrowing the government. The CPP-NPA focused on the existence of U.S. military bases in the Philippines as a cause of socio-political problems. It extensively focused on the exploitation of the U.S. military presence and sovereignty issue. The CPP-NPA used its unified legal front and armed propaganda units in an intensified anti-American propaganda campaign to incite the masses. They propagate the U.S. presence as a symbol of continuing American oppression that tramples Philippine sovereignty. They expound that the ongoing insurgency is a continuation of the Philippines revolution during the American colonization.

In addition, the dictatorial regime of President Ferdinand Marcos from 1965 to 1986 instigated the rise of the insurgency. The Marcos martial law regime's undemocratic ways and blatant human rights abuses committed by the Philippine military created a negative mantra. The martial law period formed socio-political issues favorable to the insurgents. However, Ferdinand E. Marcos believed otherwise. Marcos argued that the declaration of martial law seeks to curtail the brewing combined social, political, and internal security threats.<sup>118</sup> Varied internal security threats challenged the GPH in this period that includes the CPP-NPA communist insurgency, Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) secessionist movement in Mindanao, rightist conspiracy and rampant criminality in the Philippines.<sup>119</sup> In particular, the CPP-NPA instigated massive uprisings, and violent political crimes triggered the declaration of the martial law that promotes its revolutionary struggle.<sup>120</sup> The communist insurgents executed stealthy violent actions targeting the political rivals of Marcos aimed to create a traumatic event that could turn the tide of the armed struggle as exemplified in the Plaza Miranda

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<sup>118</sup> Ferdinand E. Marcos, *Progress and Martial Law* (Manila, Philippines: F.E. Marcos, 1981), 1–20.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Gregg R. Jones, *Red Revolution: Inside the Philippine Guerrilla Movement* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989), 103–112.

bombing on August 21, 1971.<sup>121</sup> Marcos argued that the application of the martial law was lawful with full approval of the legislative and judicial institution of the Philippines, but not by his wishes.<sup>122</sup> Ninoy Aquino, Marcos' political archrival, confirmed that the Philippines was a sick society in need of reforms that needed an authoritarian regime.<sup>123</sup> Marshall Green, the assistant secretary for East Asia, further defended Marcos' implementation of martial law as an essential deed to address the deplorable breakdown of the integral social fabric of the Philippines.<sup>124</sup> Nonetheless, the rampant abuses of the Philippine military favored the narrative of the CPP-NPA propaganda. The propaganda prevailed over the real intention of martial law. Surprisingly, the United States, the worldwide human rights advocate, sidelined the issue. They prioritized strategic interests over the alleged abuses of Marcos' regime. Besides, the United States had its share of social and military abuses committed by American service members in the Philippines. Further, the overthrow of the Marcos regime would incur a loss of a staunch ally detrimental to the U.S. interest.

Nevertheless, the Philippine-U.S. military alliance maintained its strong ties during the Marcos regime. The U.S. government continued its support to the GPH and its development effort of the Philippine armed forces. The GPH and its military reaped the benefits and compensation from the alliance-institutionalized structures. The military and security structures of the Alliance covered three agreements that include are the Mutual Defense Pact, Military Assistance Agreement, and Military Facilities Agreement.<sup>125</sup> On January 6, 1979, the Philippines and the United States redefined the provision of the U.S. military bases by making a significant revision to the Military Bases Agreement of 1947.<sup>126</sup> The amendment reaffirmed Philippine sovereignty over the U.S. military bases

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 59–69.

<sup>122</sup> Marcos, *Progress and Martial Law*, 148.

<sup>123</sup> Karnow, *In our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines*, 360.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Marcos termed the three agreements differently. Over time, the names of the agreement changed, but they are more popularly known as the Mutual Defense Treaty, Military Assistance Pact, and Military Bases Agreement. M. Rajaretnam and Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, *Trends in the Philippines II: Proceedings and Background Paper* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1978), 26.

<sup>126</sup> Dolan, *Philippines: A Country Study*.

in the Philippines, reduced the aggregate area of the military reservations, and required a bi-decade review of the agreement. Marcos' political maneuvering and aggressive negotiation on base compensation led to the increase of U.S. military and economic aid to the Philippines. It amounted to U.S. \$400 million in the period of 1979 to 1983.<sup>127</sup> Adversely, the Philippines problem in internal security and the declaration of martial law steered the AFP as a primary internal force. The AFP focused extensively towards economic development, administration of martial rule, and internal security operations.<sup>128</sup> Thus, the AFP became an internal security-centric force but external defense inept.

In terms of external defense cooperation, the Philippine-U.S. Alliance worked together in various international military engagements. Filipino soldiers fought alongside the United States in battling the communist forces in the Korean War and Vietnam War. Moreover, the Philippines served as a valuable asset to the U.S. Pacific's strategy of deterrence and naval offensive capability.<sup>129</sup> In particular, the American bases in the Philippines were instrumental to the U.S. Cold War strategy in their quest for global stability and hegemony. The bases operated extensively as logistics hubs and staging points in support of U.S. military operations in the Asia-Pacific and the Middle East region.<sup>130</sup> It increased the U.S. logistical power and flexible force projection that safeguards U.S. strategic interests.<sup>131</sup> In Southeast Asia, the bases became a center for operation in America's intervention activities in Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, and Taiwan. Reciprocally, the U.S. bases provided external defense to the Philippines that deterred foreign invasion.

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Renato Cruz De Castro, "Adjusting to the Post-U.S. Bases Era: The Ordeal of the Philippine Military's Modernization Program," *Armed Forces and Society* 26, no. 1 (Fall 1999), 120.

<sup>129</sup> Geoffrey Kemp, "U.S. Military Power in the Pacific: Problems and Prospects: Part I," *Adelphi Papers* 27, no. 216 (1987): 43–51.

<sup>130</sup> Gregory P. Corning, "The Philippine Bases and U.S. Pacific Strategy," *Pacific Affairs, University of British Columbia* 63 (Spring 1990): 6–23.

<sup>131</sup> Amitav Acharya, "The Asia-Pacific Region: Cockpit for Superpower Rivalry," *The World Today* 43, no. 8/9 (August–September 1987): 155–158.

## **B. THE PHILIPPINE-U.S. ALLIANCE BEYOND THE COLD WAR**

In Southeast Asia, the end of the Cold War created an opportunity for the nation-states to realign alliances and foreign policies. This realignment and non-alignment were in response to the power related consequences with the dissolution of the Soviet Union.<sup>132</sup> From the Philippine perspective, the post-Cold War would substantiate a new era of regional conflicts and the resurgence of ancient ethnic and religious enmities.<sup>133</sup> The realignment of foreign policies and adoption of respective programs of national development would create a political space for traditional movements to arise.<sup>134</sup> The re-emergence of regional and traditional threats coupled with the socio-political and economic implications of the post-Cold War drove nations to evaluate their alignment with emerging powers. The dynamics of the post-Cold War era swayed the future of military alliances.

The collapse of the Soviet Union marked the end of the Cold War. It resulted in the U.S. reassessment of its global strategy. In the Asia-Pacific region, the United States shifted its policy to the reduction of forward-deployed forces and establishment of numerous bilateral and multilateral defense treaties. One critical aspect of the policy change is the U.S. budgetary constraint. The U.S. defense budget played a vital role in the development of its post-Cold War policy. The post-Cold War showed the United States suffering from internal constraints due to enormous domestic budgetary and trade deficits. The budget restrained the United States from executing direct military intervention unless there are clear dangers to essential American investments.<sup>135</sup> Its defense spending during the Cold War period proved costly and bloated the U.S. defense budget.<sup>136</sup> In addition, the United States shifted its forces towards the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and Latin America to address varying security concerns. Hence, the

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<sup>132</sup> Yahuda, *The Impact of the Cold War and the Struggles for Independence*, 19–35.

<sup>133</sup> Carmencita Karagdag, Augusto N. Miclat, and People's Diplomacy Training Program for Philippine NGOs, *Beyond the Cold War: Philippine Perspectives on the Emerging World Order* (Manila, Philippines: People's Diplomacy Training Program for Philippine NGOs, 1992), 20.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

reduction of U.S. military assets and personnel created a security vacuum in the Asia-Pacific region. It created an opportunity for China, a growing regional power, to expand unchallenged and in so doing, tilted the balance of power. Most importantly, it would affect the contemporary status of the Philippine-U.S. alliance.

The end of the Cold War roused the awareness for Filipino self-identity. It heralded the rise of Filipino nationalism. It magnified the Filipino nationalist's quest for sovereignty and increased nationwide anti-American and anti-nuclear sentiments. The radicalized students and the communist insurgents collaborated with the so-called "civil-societies" in the struggle to end the U.S. presence. The 1986 EDSA revolution that ousted the Marcos regime intensified Filipino nationalism and the call for the U.S. bases removal. The Filipinos' intense anti-U.S. sentiments emanated from the U.S. support of the Marcos dictatorship, U.S. service members human rights abuses, and the U.S. bases consequential social issues. In addition, the partiality of the media as a propaganda tool of the progressive groups influenced the Filipino people's opinion. It served as a medium in the aggravated call for the immediate ejection of the U.S. bases.

In addition, Filipino politicians' prevailing view on security matters steered the course of the Philippine-U.S. alliance. The fall of the Soviet Union created an atmosphere of peace that put the alliance in question. The mandate of the alliance as a foreign aggression deterrence diminished. The absence of credible external threats in the Philippines made the U.S. security umbrella irrelevant. The post-Cold War condition further aggravated the activism of the Filipino politicians and elites during the Cold War. It strengthened their outlook that the alliance was economically beneficial with little security significance. These beliefs threatened the importance of the alliance. It would continue to contribute to the non-allocation of necessary defense budget for the AFP external defense capability upgrade. Consequently, the various conditions in the post-cold war and the contradictory perspective of the Philippines and the U.S. political leaders led to the weakening of the alliance in the early 1990. According to Barton Brown's description in *The Philippine-United States Bases Debate* (1993), the rift between the United States and the Philippines regarding the U.S. bases issue was "wedded to divergent conceptions of reciprocity, neither side understands the other's appeals for fair

and just exchange.”<sup>137</sup> The politicians of both countries were inconsistent concerning the requisites and nuances of the military bases agreement.

The rise of Filipino nationalism, the political squabbles, and the communist insurgents’ intensified anti-U.S. propaganda weakened the stability of the alliance. The Filipino traditional politicians took advantage the post-Cold War effect and the globalization to empower themselves and dictate the direction of the alliance. On the other hand, the communist insurgents used the socio-political, cultural, environmental, and economic interconnections to their advantage in pursuance of their strategic objectives that created widespread GPH concerns. They used prominent issues such as the disparity of wealth among the rich and poor Filipinos and the infringement of the Philippine sovereignty and independence attributed to the U.S. military presence. The combined actions of the politicians and the insurgents posed as a clear and present threat on the stability of the alliance. The growing unpopularity of U.S. military presence in the Philippines and its numerous domestic abuses fueled the Philippine Congress to terminate the 1947 RP-U.S. Military Bases Agreement.

On September 16, 1991, the alliance suffered a setback when the Philippine Senate abolished the 1947 Philippine-U.S. Military Bases Agreement ending the 94 years of U.S. military presence in the Philippines.<sup>138</sup> The rejection of the Treaty of Cooperation, Friendship, and Security relinquished the American control of the bases in Clark Air Base on November 26, 1991, and the Subic Naval Base in December 1991 and triggered the dramatic withdrawal of U.S. troops from the Philippines. The U.S. response of downgrading its political and military relationship with the Philippines further degraded the alliance into an informal partnership. Its withdrawal of military assistance and its assignment of external security responsibility to the Philippines significantly affected the Philippine defense capability.

The end of the U.S. military aid and economic benefits from the bases compensation degraded the AFP. The AFP’s deplorable state eroded the Philippines

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<sup>137</sup> Barton Brown, “The Philippine-United States Bases Debate: Why the Twain Never Met,” *Asian Affairs: An American Review* 20, no. 3 (1993): 162–178.

<sup>138</sup> Felix K. Chang, “GI Come Back,” *Foreign Policy Research Institute* (October 2013).

credibility as a nation-state incapable of asserting its territorial integrity, defending its exclusive economic zone and in containing internal security threats.<sup>139</sup> Furthermore, the bureaucratic gridlock of the local legislative bodies, the strained relationship with the United States, and the 1997 Asian currency crisis worsened the Philippines' dilemma that affected the AFP modernization.<sup>140</sup> The weakening of the alliance affected the AFP. In his article, "Adjusting to the Post-U.S. Bases Era," Renato De Castro argued that the post-Cold War left the AFP as "one of the most ill-equipped and poorly funded armed forces in the Southeast Asian region after the Cold War."<sup>141</sup>

### C. REVITALIZING THE PHILIPPINE-U.S. ALLIANCE

The aftermath of the 1992 U.S. military bases closure in the Philippines put the alliance at its lowest point. In his article, "The Revitalized Philippine-U.S. Security relations," De Castro pointed out that the Philippines and the United States "lacked a consensus on the alliance's *raison d'être*."<sup>142</sup> The consequential U.S. action of downgrading the Philippines as an insignificant ally on its Southeast Asian policy diminished the strategic importance of the Philippine-U.S. alliance.<sup>143</sup> Notwithstanding the tremors caused by the eventual waning of the Philippine-U.S. military alliance, both nations maintained the MDT of 1951 and the 1958 MDB. These bilateral security arrangements served as the basis for the continuing military partnership of the two nations during its adverse time. It served as a reassurance to the continuing strategic security cooperation and commitment of both nations. It showed the significance of maintaining their security relationship for future strategic endeavor. The Philippines' move to uphold the alliance mechanisms implied its reluctance to discard a longtime ally who shares mutual interest and ideals. Correspondingly, the U.S. adherence to these agreements indicates its continuous interest of keeping an amorous ally with significant

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<sup>139</sup> Cruz De Castro, "Adjusting to the Post-U.S. Bases Era: The Ordeal of the Philippine Military's Modernization Program," 119–137.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Renato Cruz De Castro, "The Revitalized Philippine-U.S. Security Relations: A Ghost from the Cold War or an Alliance for the 21st Century?" *Asian Survey* 43, no. 6 (November 2003): 974.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

geopolitical potential in the Southeast Asian Region. In the pursuit of shared interests, the United States and the Philippines settled for a reduced alliance with a potential to rebound in times of need.

Three years after the U.S. bases pullout from the Philippines in 1992, a new threat emerged that challenged the territorial integrity and external defense capability of the Republic of the Philippines. The People's Republic of China's (PRC) rise as a global power used its military might to flex its muscles in its foreign policy projection. Its assertive stance in the Southeast Asia involved the encroachment of the disputed islands claimed by Southeast Asian nations that include the Philippines. In January 1995, the PRC deployed naval vessels and built structures at the Mischief Reef located 150 miles from the Philippine coast.<sup>144</sup> The reef's proximity to the western frontier of the Philippines triggered the hysteria for the AFP Modernization and the idea of revitalizing its alliance with the United States.<sup>145</sup>

The incident exposed the Philippines' weak external defense posture. The GPH came to realize that it would take decades to establish a credible force to protect its territory. Its puny external security forces could not deter China's growing expansionism in the South China Sea.<sup>146</sup> The GPH conceded that a full Armed Forces modernization would not stand with China's military might. However, military confrontations between the Philippine and Chinese forces were inevitable. A 90-minute naval gun battle erupted between the maritime forces of the Philippines and China in January 1996.<sup>147</sup> In addition, the Philippine Navy engaged in the destruction of markers in the disputed islands and

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<sup>144</sup> John D. Ciorciari, *The Limits of Alignment: Southeast Asia and the Great Powers since 1975* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2010), 98.

<sup>145</sup> Renato Cruz De Castro, "The U.S.-Philippine Alliance: An Evolving Hedge against an Emerging China Challenge," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 31, no. 3 (December 2009): 404–406.

<sup>146</sup> Renato Cruz De Castro, "Reconfiguring 21st Century Philippine-United States Alliance: Facing Up to a China Challenge in the South China Sea?" *Tamkang Journal of International Affairs* 17, no. 1 (2013a): 1–48.

<sup>147</sup> Joshua P. Rowan, "The U.S.-Japan Security Alliance, ASEAN, and the South China Sea Dispute," *Asian Survey: A Monthly Review of Contemporary Asian Studies* 45, no. 3 (May/June 2005): 421.



reefs.<sup>148</sup> However, China's persistent multi-pronged approach in seizing disputed reefs prevailed. China's gunboat policy aided in its expansionist goal of capturing disputed reefs and atolls in the South China Sea.<sup>149</sup> These events sparked the Philippines interest in reestablishing its alliance with the United States.

China's growing assertiveness and military adventurism impelled the United States to reestablish its alliance with the Philippines in order to protect U.S. maritime and strategic interest in the region.<sup>150</sup> China's boldness to expand beyond the Asia-Pacific region became imminent, as its reprehensible actions remain unrestrained. China's gunboat policy undermines established international maritime laws and promotes conflict. Its naval forces have dominated important sea-lanes of communication and have challenged traversing maritime traffic. In connection with this, the U.S. demanded the GPH to establish legal frameworks using the MDT to cover U.S. troops in the Philippines engaged in joint military-to-military activities with its counterparts. This request paved the way for the development of a permanent status of forces agreement (SOFA) for temporary deployed U.S. troops in the Philippines.

On February 10, 1998, Philippine Foreign Affairs Secretary Domingo Siazon Jr. and U.S. Ambassador Thomas Hubbard signed the Philippine-U.S. Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA), the status of forces agreement.<sup>151</sup> In order for the VFA to become executory, the Philippine Senate ratified the agreement on May 27, 1999, through Senate Resolution No. 18.<sup>152</sup> The VFA is an executory agreement to the Philippine-U.S. MDT of 1951 that ushered for the recommencement of combined military activities between the Philippines and the United States intended for interoperability and military forces

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<sup>148</sup> Chen Hurng-Yu, "The PRC's South China Sea Policy and Strategies of Occupation in the Paracel and Spratly Islands," *Issues and Studies-English Edition* 36, no. 4 (2000): 109.

<sup>149</sup> Gunboat diplomacy is a maritime show of force that aims to influence the policy makers of the targeted state. Matthew R. Costlow, "Gunboat Diplomacy in the South China Sea," *Air Force Academy Colorado Springs Institute for National Security Studies* (January 2012): 1–64.

<sup>150</sup> De Castro, *The U.S.-Philippine Alliance: An Evolving Hedge Against an Emerging China Challenge*, 405.

<sup>151</sup> Presidential Commission on the Visiting Forces Agreement, "Frequently Asked Questions for VFA Com Website," VFA Commission, <http://www.vfacom.ph/content/article/FAQs>.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

development.<sup>153</sup> It serves as the legal framework that guarantees the lawful foothold of the U.S. military personnel in the Philippines and justifies U.S. military presence. It also permits the U.S. military troops to train, assist, and advise Philippine military troops to enhance interoperability and overall aggregate military capacity. However, it also stipulates that the prohibition of U.S. armed forces to engage in combat operations and the establishment of permanent forward operating bases in the Philippines. The signing of the VFA revitalized the decade-long hiatus of the Philippine-U.S. alliance. It manifested the mutual strategic security interdependence of the two nations. The Philippines needs the United States in its external security requirement, and the United States needs the Philippines as a geopolitical ally in support of its Asia-Pacific security interests. The VFA facilitated the restoration of the alliance, but the advent of international terrorism served as a catalyst in the revitalization of the Philippine-U.S. bilateral security cooperation.

The September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in New York, at the Pentagon, and in the airplane crash in Pennsylvania crash influenced a new security perspective of terrorism. Nations have become vulnerable to the threat of transnational non-state actors advocating violent terrorism. The call to the GWOT by U.S. President George Bush echoed worldwide that the GPH accepted. GWOT is a controversial term that encompasses all United States military strategy in combating AQ related, international, terrorist organizations. The presence of the AQ-linked Jemaah Islamiyah, and Abu Sayyaf Group in Southern Philippines established the opportunity for the United States to open up a GWOT front in Southeast Asia. President Gloria Arroyo and President Bush settled for the placement of U.S. Special Operation forces personnel in the Philippines. Their primary goal was to train and advise members of the Philippine Armed Forces in the rudiments of counterterrorism aimed to neutralize transnational and domestic Islamic radicals and AQ-linked terrorist groups in Southern Philippines. The AFP and the U.S. armed forces resumed dormant joint military exercises, such as the “Balikatan” (Shoulder-to-Shoulder) exercises. Most of the joint training exercises focused on counterterrorism and counterinsurgency warfare, intelligence exchange training, civic-

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

military operations, and logistics training. Similarly, on November 21, 2002, the Philippines and the United States signed the Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA). The MLSA is a framework of engagement that outlines the approach on mutual exchange of logistics support, supplies, and services throughout the duration of sanctioned military events. It supports most of the MDB-SEB programmed activities. In addition, the MLSA facilitated the AFP's access to the U.S. military excess defense articles (EDA), an avenue to procure warfighting ground equipment, air and naval assets, and other military needs.

In January 2002, the Joint Special Task Force-Philippines (JSOTF-P) composed of combined U.S. armed services specialists deployed on a rotation basis in Southern Philippines. As part of the Operation Enduring Freedom, the JSOTF-P mandate was "to support the comprehensive approach of the Armed Forces of the Philippines in their fight against terrorism."<sup>154</sup> Armed Forces of the Philippines units involved in counterterrorism efforts trained with the JSOTF-P that enhanced their antiterrorism skills. A joint effort between the United States and the Philippine forces resulted to a decrease in strength and presence of local terrorist group. However, the presence of the U.S. combat forces in the Philippines deemed unconstitutional. Philippine authorities declared that the provisions of the MDT and MDB do not cover non-traditional threats. Terrorism is a non-traditional threat because of its character as transnational non-state actors. The inapplicability of the MDT and MDB in the crusade against terrorism urged the GPH and the USG to establish a new framework. Initially, the United States and the Philippines negotiated special rules of engagements to circumnavigate the Philippine constitutional provisions of banning foreign troops to operate in the country. The political sensitivity of the sovereignty issue led to the creation of the Philippine-U.S. Security Engagement Board (SEB). The Romulo-Kenney Exchange of Notes on April 12, 2006, ushered the formal establishment of the SEB anchored with the Philippine-U.S. VFA.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Thomas Lum and Larry A. Niksch, *The Republic of the Philippines: Background and U.S. Relations* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2009): 15–16.

<sup>155</sup> Presidential Commission on the Visiting Forces Agreement, "Frequently Asked Questions for VFA Com Website," 1.

Similar to the MDB, the SEB as a legal and policy mechanism provides the GPH and the USG direct avenue to mutually approach non-traditional security issues in a direct and cyclical consultative way.<sup>156</sup> The SEB aims to develop measures and arrangements for enhancing cooperation in addressing non-traditional security concerns as agreed by both parties.<sup>157</sup> The non-traditional security concerns comprise terrorism, transnational crimes, maritime security and safety, and natural and man-made disasters.<sup>158</sup> The SEB as a new legal framework address the concerns on the deployment of the U.S. Forces in Mindanao in the guise of conducting support in the war against terrorism. It allows the rotational deployment of U.S. troops and the transit of U.S. military assets in the Philippines. The Philippines' participation in the Operations Enduring Freedom ascertained the importance of the country as a strategic ally of the United States in its war against terror. Its armed forces, as the primary recipient of the corresponding benefits, led to the improvement of its counterterrorism and humanitarian assistance function. For more than a decade, the U.S. military effectively supported the ability of the Philippine military to wage war in combatting terrorism that led to the decline of the local terrorist's capacity to wage violence.

#### **D. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION**

If we are to review the events during the Cold War era using Walt's balance of threat theory, it predicts the formation and strengthening of the Philippine-U.S. alliance in consonance with the theory's main points. Though the Philippines was not directly threatened by the Soviet Union, it aligned with the United States because of the ideological factor and penetration. The Cold War exposed the expanding U.S. involvement in the Asia-Pacific, specifically in the East Asian region. The United States and the Philippines shared principles and ideals led to the alignment and establishment of the Philippine-U.S. alliance. The formalization of the Philippine-U.S. alliance supported

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<sup>156</sup> MDB-SEB EXECOM, *The Philippine-United States Security Exchange Board Terms of Reference*, April 12, 2006.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Presidential Commission on the Visiting Forces Agreement, "Frequently Asked Questions for VFA Com Website," 1.

the policy of containment of the United States. In addition, it promoted the protection of the two nations' shared interests. The Philippines and the United States, as separate sovereign nations, shared the common values of freedom and democracy. Despite the intricacies developed during the colonial period, the United States and the Philippines sustained their interdependent relationship. The direction that the American colonization took in the Philippines in the political, economic, cultural, and military aspect significantly influenced the Philippines' perspective on the significance of the Philippine-U.S. alliance. The Philippine-U.S. alliance exemplified the benefit of sharing resources and responsibility in pursuit of a common goal. It emphasized the importance of co-optation and the precise role of the members in facing threats with socio-political influence as exemplified in the Huk counterinsurgency operations.

The other factors that led to the Philippine-U.S. alliance conform to the theory's penetration and bribery principles. The U.S. and the Philippine politicians and the elites influenced the cultural and political ethos of the alliance. The U.S. colonization and post-colonization shaped the contemporary socio-political and cultural system of the Philippines. The self-serving Filipino elites and traditional politicians controlled the political and economic systems, and they remain uncommitted to the alleviation of decaying social conditions. They remained insensitive towards the average Filipino's tangible economic and political demands; what concerned them was how to become more powerful and affluent. Most Filipino elites and politicians succumbed to the U.S. pressure of establishing and maintaining control of the Philippines.

The United States would use its bases as an instrument of control for the Philippines. The U.S. bases in the Philippines revealed the drawn-out U.S. foreign policy that includes the establishment and maintenance of social control since the colonial period.<sup>159</sup> It highlighted the American interventionism in Philippine affairs. Furthermore, the U.S. bases would exemplify the conflict and collaboration of the Filipino elites with the U.S. politicians. The U.S. military bases in the Philippines served the vested self-interests of fallible Filipino politicians and the elites. They focused more on the

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<sup>159</sup> Kathleen Weekley, "The National or the Social? Problems of Nation-Building in Post-World War II Philippines," *Third World Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (2006): 85–100.

economics benefits rather than the security impact of the Philippine-U.S. alliance that would affect the future direction of the alliance and the development of the Philippine armed forces.

The Philippine-U.S. alliance created a false sense of security in the Philippines. The Philippines delegated its inherent responsibility of external protection to the United States. The security umbrella provided by the United States diminished the Philippine leaders' interest to develop its armed forces. It contributed to the superficial development of the Philippine armed forces territorial capacity. In the same way, the Philippines' focus on internal security operations deflected its external defense capability upgrade. During the Cold War, most ASEAN countries were engaged in an arms race that led to the extensive development of their external security structures. On the other hand, the Philippines did not participate in the arms race for it relied on the U.S. forces' external might in securing its territory. At the end of the Cold War, the Philippines would suffer the consequences of the pathetic development of its external defense structure. It would leave the Philippines external defense capability inferior to that of its ASEAN neighbors. Fortunately, the Philippine-U.S. alliance withstood the security challenges of the Cold War. Its survival could be attributed to the absence of a U.S.-Soviet Union's armed conflict that could have affected the Philippines. Nonetheless, the Cold War substantiates the importance of an alliance between a superpower and a weak state. Yet, it also exposed a gap in the alliance. First, the United States needs to improve the Philippine security position in order to harness its full potential as a military ally in the Southeast Asian region in which Walt argues that states in alliance aggregate their ability to deter an opposing force. Second, the MDT disconnects the United States and the Philippines because of the "security-sovereignty issue" where a clear-cut automatic response by the United States is vague in the case where the Philippines were attacked externally. Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos reiterated the problem during an undated speech in a press conference where he stated that the U.S. response is not immediate due to vagueness in the article of MDT.<sup>160</sup> He stated that the provision of Mutual Defense Pact

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<sup>160</sup> President Ferdinand Marcos "Philippine Issues September 17, 1982," You Tube video, 1:02:06, posted by "Ralph Que," January 30, 2014, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ROaFLXg3r-8>.

causes delay in U.S. response due to the stated constitutional processes before its forces can react. On the role of threat to the dynamics of the alliance in this period, the existential threat provided a reason for the two nations to formalize the alliance and establish necessary mechanisms. The alliance used these mechanisms in the successful defeat of the HUK rebellion and in support of the security need of the United States during the Vietnam War and containment policy against the Soviet Union.

The post-Cold War effect and rapid globalization left the Philippine-U.S. alliance at its nadir. As predicted by Walt, an alliance dissolves when the threatening party is defeated. The end of the Cold War did not end the Philippine-U.S. alliance, but it became insignificant. In addition, the principle of ideology and penetration manifested an opposite outcome. They did not help in the maintenance of the effectiveness of the alliance. Instead, they became a factor for the weakening of the alliance. The end of the Cold War invoked social and political adjustment for the Philippines and United States. It affected the two nations' policies and their respective outlook in international affairs. In addition, globalization became a tool of concerned parties in advancing their self-interests. These factors specifically the rooted consequence of the globalization influenced the state of the alliance. It created sufficient conditions that eventually led to the waning of the Philippine-U.S. alliance. Nonetheless, the Philippines and the United States maintained the legal frameworks, the Mutual Defense Treaty of 1951 and the PH-U.S. Mutual Defense Board, which bonded their ties. The treaty and the mechanism acted as a conduit in the continuous functioning of the alliance during its rock bottom state. In due course, these frameworks and mechanisms would serve as a springboard in the revitalization of the PH-U.S. alliance in response to China's military expansionism and the advent of global terrorism.

The central arguments of Walt's balance of threat theory are clearly distinguishable during the revitalization period of the Philippine-U.S. alliance. As discussed previously, the Philippines and the United States revitalized their alliance due to the presence of China that poses a threat to the interests of both nations. In particular, the Philippines balanced with the United States to counteract the threat of China as predicted by Walt based on the source of threat principle. In addition, the shared

ideology, the reciprocal penetration of the member-states' systems and the U.S. foreign aid to the Philippines led to the strengthening of the alliance. Hence, the existence of threats served as the impetus in the renewal of the Philippine-U.S. Alliance.

The Philippines and the United States rekindled their interests in increasing their security cooperation in response to the advent of traditional and non-traditional threats. The threat of international terrorism and China's expansionism constituted as a security challenge to both nations. The rise of militarized China tilted the balance of power in the Asia-Pacific region, and the advent of international terrorism undermines the security stability of both nations. Once again, their shared security concerns and strategic interests functioned as stimuli to the revitalization of the Philippine-U.S. alliance and the creation of new mechanisms. The signing of the VFA and the Philippine-U.S. MDB-SEB further enhanced the primacy of the alliance. The institutionalization of security agreements served as a concrete mechanism in addressing constitutional restrictions that impeded the efficacy of the alliance. The emplaced mechanisms not only addressed traditional threats of foreign aggression, but it also catered to non-traditional threats of terrorism and transnational crimes. Most importantly, the alliance moved into the disaster and human assistance realm that promoted its legitimacy. These undertakings transformed the alliance ability to respond in any unforeseen occurrences. In addition, the establishment of the MLSA supports the efficient execution of the alliance mandate of challenging traditional and non-traditional threats. Thus, the establishment and institutionalization of various Philippine-U.S. framework of engagement enhances the alliance responsiveness as an interoperable force ready to face future challenges. From 2002 to 2008, counterterrorism activities and human assistance disaster response helped to sustain the low-level bilateral security alliance of the Philippines and the United States.



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## **IV. THE PHILIPPINE-U.S. ALLIANCE: CONTEMPORARY OPPORTUNITY AND CHALLENGES**

This chapter focuses on the security challenges and opportunities of the Philippine-U.S. alliance. The threats presented comprise shared and unshared threat in the alliance threat assessment. The China threat is applicable to the balancing and bandwagoning principles of Walt's theory. However, though the CNN and the terrorism problem are domestic and classified as internal security problems, they affect the dynamics of the alliance. Using Walt's theory as a guide, this chapter analyzes the effect of threat in the dynamics of the Philippine-U.S. alliance. The purpose of which is to highlight the influence of traditional and non-traditional threat in the alliance. Furthermore, at the end of the chapter, a discussion on the U.S. Asia-Pacific pivot highlights the interplay of threats and alliance mechanisms.

### **A. SECURITY CHALLENGES**

The Philippine-U.S. alliance is presently confronted by a mixture of internal and external threats. The security challenges presented are the main factors that influence the contemporary status of the alliance.

#### **1. The Philippine Front in the Global War on Terrorism**

The non-traditional threat of international terrorism served as one of the factors in the Philippine-U.S. alliance revitalization and the designation of the Philippines as a major non-NATO ally.<sup>161</sup> The lethality of the well-orchestrated September 11, 2001, terrorist attack in the United States started a global campaign to fight terrorism.<sup>162</sup> The GPH's acceptance of the cooperative engagement against transnational terrorists opened

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<sup>161</sup> Lum and Niksch, *The Republic of the Philippines: Background and U.S. Relations*, 14.

<sup>162</sup> Renato Cruz De Castro, "Territorial Disputes, Realpolitik, and Alliance Transformation: The Case of Twenty-First Century Philippine-U.S. Security Relations," *Issues & Studies* 49, no. 1 (March 2013b): 142.

up the second front of the GWOT in Southern Philippines.<sup>163</sup> The presence of the AQ-linked transnational terrorist groups of the Indonesian Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and Philippine's ASG in Mindanao plagued the Philippines and its neighboring countries. Fighting for the establishment of regional Islamic caliphate, the JI collaborated with the ASG to create a regional terrorist network. The ASG espouses Sharia law and religious agenda to execute extreme violent activities in coercing the establishment of an Islamic state in Mindanao.<sup>164</sup> The ruthlessness and dramatic activities of the ASG and being a part of an international terrorist network prompted the GPH and the U.S. to concentrate in eliminating them.

The GPH support for the GWOT led to the renewal of the alliance and the prioritization of the Philippines as a recipient of the U.S. Security Force Assistance specifically on Foreign Internal Defense (SFA-FID).<sup>165</sup> Unique to other GWOT fronts, the U.S. Forces merely provides advice and assistance to the AFP to enhance its capacity in executing counterterrorism efforts. The Philippines Constitution prohibits foreign forces to engage in direct combat operations in the Philippines. Thus, a large part of the U.S. operations concentrates on joint development projects and humanitarian assistance spearheaded by Armed Forces of the Philippines. The non-kinetic strategy intends to alleviate socio-economic issues in the targeted area that will empower the local populace to stand against terrorism. For decades, the focused joint civic-military actions and military exercises of the alliance aimed at the AQ-linked terrorist groups diminished the potency of the Islamist terrorism in Southern Philippines.<sup>166</sup> Strikingly, the U.S.G. restricted its military from aiding the GPH in quelling the Philippine's Communist Insurgency.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Diane K. Mauzy and Brian L. Job, "U.S. Policy in Southeast Asia : Limited Re-Engagement After Years of Benign Neglect," *Asian Survey : A Monthly Review of Contemporary Asian Studies Asian Survey* Vol.47, no. 4 (July–August 2007): 635.

<sup>164</sup> Peter Chalk, "Separatism and Southeast Asia: The Islamic Factor in Southern Thailand, Mindanao, and Aceh," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 24, no. 4 (July 2001): 241–269,

<sup>165</sup> Michael J. Carden, *Trainers, Advisors Help Philippines Fight Terrorism* (Lanham, United States: Federal Information & News Dispatch, 2010).

<sup>166</sup> Lum and Nicksch, *The Republic of the Philippines: Background and U.S. Relations*, 14.

<sup>167</sup> Carden, *Trainers, Advisors Help Philippines Fight Terrorism*, n/d.

The GWOT and its front in the Philippines continue on. The present weakened state of the ASG and its regression, as a bandit group, does not signal decisive victory for the Philippines and the alliance. The ASG will continue to tarnish the Philippine image, and it will continue to challenge the alliance by resorting to banditry. Its persistence will remain unabated. The high paying kidnap for ransom activities continues to nurture the ASG. In addition, the religious fanaticism of the ASG to pursue its Islamist agenda can again transform into its former stature as an able and justified terrorist group in waging military, political, and ideological war. The ASG can bounce back to its former self as it aligns with the emerging influential terrorist organization like the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). The alignment may not be in the form of physical alliance with the network but on influencing its aim and ideology.

Recently, the ASG and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) pledged their allegiance to the ISIS.<sup>168</sup> The popularity of the ISIS and its aim to establish a global Islamic Caliphate garnered support from Islamic religious leaders and followers in Southern Philippines.<sup>169</sup> The exposure of the Khilafah Islamiyah Movement (KIM), better known as the Khilafah Islamiyah Mindanao-Black Flag Movement, a secretive group that existed a few years back, organized and led the pledge of allegiance.<sup>170</sup> The religious war in the Middle East initiated by the ISIS has attracted many foreign fighters from the ASEAN region. Unconfirmed number of radical Islamic terrorists belonging to the JI ASG, and BIFF reportedly joined as foreign Jihadists in the Middle East.<sup>171</sup> BIFF, led by Umbra Kato, is the armed component of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement (BIFM). The ISIS can radicalize the BIFM and ASG, which can transform them into a combined, well-coordinated, and more sophisticated terrorist group. Joining a

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<sup>168</sup> GMA News Online, "BIFF, ASG Pledge Allegiance to Islamic State Jihadists," *GMA News Online*, sec. News, August 16, 2014, <http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/375074/news/nation/biff-abu-sayyaf-pledge-allegiance-to-islamic-state-jihadists>.

<sup>169</sup> Moh I. Saadduddin, "Military Investigates IS Oath Taking in Marawi City," *The Manila Times*, sec. News, September 22, 2014, <http://www.manilatimes.net/military-investigates-oath-taking-marawi-city/128633/>.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> *Asian Pacific Post*, "Foreign Fighters from Asia Joining Islamic Jihad," *Asia Pacific Post*, sec. Home, September 23, 2014, <http://www.asianpacificpost.com/article/6448-foreign-fighters-asia-joining-islamic-jihad.html>.

foreign Jihad has become a trademark and sixth pillar of Islam for these terrorist groups. Most of the founders, charismatic leaders and core members of these Islamic terrorist groups in the Philippines are veteran foreign Jihadists who fought with the Taliban during the invasion of Afghanistan by the Russian forces.

Historically, the Southeast Asian-based Islamic terrorist groups collaborated in operational, training, and financial aspects in their quest for the establishment of the regional and worldwide Islamic Caliphate. The resemblance of the past and current events would likely increase the probability of the resurgence of terrorism in the Philippines. Moreover, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), a known supporter of the ASG and JI, serves as strategy-changer in Mindanao. Presently, the MILF condemns the ISIS barbarity and savagery and pledges not to support terrorism.<sup>172</sup> The ongoing peace treaty between the GPH and the MILF influenced the latter's action of denying its support to the BIFF, ASG, and ISIS violent actions and goal of establishing an Islamic Caliphate. As of now, the GPH and the MILF are in the process of enacting the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL). Its purpose, as drafted by the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace process (OPAPP), states that

The BBL aims to establish a political entity, provide its basic structure of government, in recognition of the justness and legitimacy of the cause of the Bangsamoro people and their aspiration to chart their political future through a democratic process that will secure their identity and posterity and allow for meaningful self-governance.<sup>173</sup>

The BBL is a part of the peace process brokered by the GPH and the MILF to end the hostilities in Mindanao. However, the BBL can serve as a fuse if its enactment fails. It may reignite the MILF secessionism that could lead to a costly and bloody war between the MILF and the AFP. It may trigger the renewal of an alliance between the MILF and the terrorist groups. Having curtailed the terrorists in Southern Mindanao, in 2011, the

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<sup>172</sup> Moro Islamic Liberation Front, "The ISIS and After Effects Here," *Luwaran*, sec. Editorial, August 23, 2014, <http://www.luwaran.com/index.php/editorial/item/1167-the-isis-and-after-effects-here>.

<sup>173</sup> OPAPP, "Draft Bangsamoro Basic Law," Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace Process, <http://www.opapp.gov.ph/resources/draft-bangsamoro-basic-law>.

alliance swayed its strategic focus from the GWOT towards the potential security threats in the South China Sea.<sup>174</sup>

## **2. The China Threat and the SCS Dispute**

Shifting from Marxist economic policies to capitalism in the 1980s, China has developed into one of the world's strongest economies being the second largest. China's phenomenal economic growth contributed to the fast development of its modern and powerful armed forces. China has invested heavily on its military force towards their projected flex of muscle and assertion of sovereignty.<sup>175</sup> In the realm of security, China exemplifies a rising military power that could influence global security. Its deliberate transformation from a regional to global power is evident on its effort to professionalize and revolutionize its military. However, China's shortcomings in manifesting the characteristics of a traditional great power would categorize it as a partial global power.<sup>176</sup> It does not meet the capabilities of a traditional power as revealed on its limited global power projection, non-establishment of alliances, and non-involvement in direct or indirect wars using proxy powers.<sup>177</sup>

Nonetheless, China's desire to modernize its military power was evident in its 2012 aggregate military expenditures, the second biggest in the world, amounting to \$106 billion.<sup>178</sup> Its consistent high annual defense spending for the past several years aimed to fill the gap on its military capability shortcomings. For this reason, China has become a significant but passive global security player. Within its turf, China's domineering attitude and coercive military actions persecute its neighboring states. In the Southeast Asian region, China's maritime dominance and assertive expansion remain uncontested.

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<sup>174</sup> Lum and Niksch, *The Republic of the Philippines: Background and U.S. Relations*, 14.

<sup>175</sup> Tom Vander Brook and Calum MacLeod, "China's Military Flexes its Muscle," *USA Today*, sec. Headline, July 28, 2011, [http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/world/2011-07-27-china-strengthens-military\\_n.htm](http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/world/2011-07-27-china-strengthens-military_n.htm).

<sup>176</sup> David L. Shambaugh, *China Goes Global: The Partial Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 409.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, 269.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 274.

Thus, China remains to be the most powerful Asian regional military power that affects the balance of power in the entire Asia-Pacific region.<sup>179</sup>

China's calculated military modernization and strategic posturing in the region are attributed to its historical blunders and global military power activities. First, China's inability to undertake a modest cross-border incursion, due to geographical, logistical, and command impediments, led to its debacle incurring 42,000 casualties in a month's time during its attack on Vietnam in 1979. Second, the U.S. military action and victory during the 1991 Gulf War created an impression of China's military weakness. China recognized the necessity to revolutionize its military affairs to compensate its limitation in terms of firepower, battlefield mobility, intelligence, and technology.<sup>180</sup> Third, the 1995 and 1996 Taiwan Missile Crisis served as another catalyst in on China's modernization and strategic thinking. China fired short-range ballistic missiles near Taiwan's sea, aimed at coercing the outcome of the presidential election and threatens Taiwan's independence movement. The event triggered the U.S. aircraft carrier battle groups' deployment near the area of conflict. China realized the futility of single-dimensional strike capacity to coerce Taiwan and deny the intervention of the U.S. military during the crisis. This incident made China acknowledge the importance of a full spectrum attack capability to pursue the Taiwan conflict.<sup>181</sup> The full spectrum attack capability includes the use of combined air, sea, ground, and electronic assets. Fourth, the multinational coalition's forces application of military airpower through the use of stealth technology and precision guided munitions power in the conduct of war in the global conflict areas further influenced China's desire to modernize technologically.<sup>182</sup> Finally, China valued the United States and the multinational force's ability to deploy numerous ground forces at great distances in pursuance of their strategic objectives.<sup>183</sup> These stimuli drive China to pursue an overarching strategy and potent military capability upgrade that can address

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<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 269–170.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., 276.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

its shortcoming as a rising power. Its military modernization and shift of strategic postures aim to develop its comprehensive power and prepare for the eventuality of a Taiwan conflict.<sup>184</sup> China's military dominance in the region and strengthened strategic posture, specifically in the South China Sea, provides a significant challenge to the Philippine-U.S. alliance.

The global commons and dominant states' rise and decline in power control affect security stability. The global commons, subdivided as strategic and environmental, are areas in the world that all states share.<sup>185</sup> Existing and emerging global powers are increasingly involved in the management of these global commons. The strategic commons that include sea, air, space, cyberspace, and nuclear domain are the areas most affected by the interplay of powerful states. In the perspective of Southeast Asia regional commons, the sea and air are the most affected areas of contention. A region is an area where numerous sea lines of communication and important chokepoints that make it highly significant in terms of military and economic aspect. Contending states continue to batter the strategic commons in promoting their national interests and foreign policy. Territorial expansions, logistical routes, and the need of natural resources influence the conflict of the strategic commons.

As the dominant regional power, China aggressively invokes its territorial sovereignty in all disputed islands located within its surrounding waters. It considers the surrounding water as an extension of its territory and uses its maritime dominance to impose its claim.<sup>186</sup> It has recently escalated the territorial boundary and ownership issues of the Senkaku, Paracel, and Spratly Island groups.<sup>187</sup> For decades, the Republic of the Philippines and the People's Republic of China were engaged in a dispute of sovereignty. The dispute stemmed from the claimant country's assertion of their respective sovereignty in uninhabited rocky outcrops, atolls, sandbanks, shoals, islands,

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<sup>184</sup> Ibid., 276–277.

<sup>185</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Strategic Vision: America and the Crisis of Global Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2012), 10.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.



reefs, and surrounding waters. China invoked the ambiguous “nine-dash line” that defined China’s territorial claim that includes most of the South China Sea.<sup>188</sup> China based its sovereignty claims on an historical context, on the grounds of ancient maps and literary accounts from its second century B.C. Chinese seafarers.<sup>189</sup> On the other hand, the Philippines based its claim on the enacted Presidential Decree No. 1596, signed by Ferdinand Marcos in June 11, 1978, because of geographical proximity. To substantiate its claim, the GPH conformed to the updated provisions of the United Nations Conventions on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS) in 1994. The UNCLOS states that countries are allowed to control the resources in their exclusive economic zones (EEZ), which are defined as the distance from a country’s shoreline that extends 200 nautical miles offshore. The dispute stems not only by the reason of sovereignty, but also because of the military and geostrategic importance of the area and its vast marine and oil resources.

China’s growing economy and power influenced its drive to protect its main supply route, economic and maritime source, and its strategic geopolitical advantage in the SCS. In order to achieve this, China had to establish some instruments of control and authority to operationalize its claim over its surrounding waters. On July 20, 2012, China proclaimed the creation of the Sansha City prefecture in the contested Paracel Islands empowered to oversee the entire South China Sea together with all of the disputed areas to include Spratly Island groups and Macclesfield Bank.<sup>190</sup> It established in Sansha a PLA military garrison, with a division-level command of the Hainan provincial subcommand tasked to direct military operations and managed Sansha’s defense mobilization and military reserves.<sup>191</sup> Sansha City acts as the administrative center for its claims in the SCS that progressively and methodically establishes legitimacy for its claims in the region. Their stationed military units, specifically in the navy, serve as

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<sup>188</sup> BBC News Asia, “Q & A: South China Sea Dispute,” *BBC News Asia*, sec. Asia, May 8, 2014, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-13748349>.

<sup>189</sup> Keri Phillips, “Is this a Rock or an Island? The Tiny Differences that Could Define a Region,” *ABC Radio*, sec. Rear Vision, December 10, 2013.

<sup>190</sup> Oriana Skylar Mastro, *The Sansha Garrison: China’s Deliberate Escalation in the South China Sea*, Center for New American Security (2012).

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

coercive forces in subduing developmental plans and economic undertakings of other claimant states in the SCS. China's action increased the regional tension with the Philippines and Vietnam in which they condemned the Chinese action as an infringement of their respective sovereignty.

Historically, China has employed multiple strategies in asserting its claim of sovereignty. China's new military posture and its ability to maintain maritime superiority in the South China Sea tilted the regional balance of power. As an uncontested regional power, China executed its strategic doctrines and policies by physically demonstrating its powerful military might. It employed multi-dimension strategy to implement its sovereignty and in addressing island disputes through assertive creeping invasion, quick seizure, and the non-lethal maritime confrontation and area denial tactics.

Through its "assertive creeping strategy," China established a greater physical presence in the South China Sea by occupying shoals, reefs, and islands without the use of military force.<sup>192</sup> This creeping invasion was a combined diplomatic and military strategy. First, China used the diplomacy with deception against a targeted state. China would declare the sovereignty and non-negotiability of the islands and would promise a bilateral peaceful resolution of the dispute based on international law. In addition, China would offer joint economic ventures and joint developments of natural resources with the claimant state. However, China would lay down territorial markers discreetly as the first step. If the markers remain uncontested for a period, China will erect building foundations and structures during the monsoon season.<sup>193</sup> The structures symbolized China's sovereignty over the disputed area.<sup>194</sup> Chinese seizure and occupation of the targeted disputed shoal demonstrated its resilient and non-confrontational use of military forces that do not attract international attention. This Chinese action is reminiscent of its occupation of the Mischief Shoal in the South China Sea in January 1995. In March 2014, the GPH divulged China's massive reclamation activities on five reefs located in

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<sup>192</sup> Ian James Storey, "Creeping Assertiveness: China, the Philippines and the South China Sea Dispute," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 21, no. 1 (1999): 95–118.

<sup>193</sup> Ross Marlay, "China, the Philippines, and the Spratly Islands," *Asian Affairs* 23, no. 4 (Winter 1997): 204.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*

the disputed area.<sup>195</sup> Chinese dredging reclamation operations were continuous to this date that included the Johnson South reef, Cuarteron reef, Hughes reef, Gaven reef, and Eldad, which would eventually turn them into artificial islands.<sup>196</sup>

Reportedly, because of the expansion of China's occupied reefs, the disputed area supported China's continuing efforts to harden its sovereignty claim in the SCS. In addition, concerned parties assessed that China plans to build an airstrip in the Johnson South reef, and the Fiery Cross reef, to implement its planned AIDZ.<sup>197</sup> However, the Philippines continue to challenge China through diplomatic and legal means. In response, China resorted to its diplomatic channel to explain its action as James Hardy comments, "Beijing continues to defend its right to create the islands although its logic is sometimes impenetrable."<sup>198</sup>

By way of contrast, China would prefer an immediate military action to capture a disputed island as dictated by circumstances. In 1988, Chinese naval frigates sunk two Vietnamese ships at Johnson Reef, leaving 64 sailors dead, which popularized this incident as the massacre of the Vietnamese Navy.<sup>199</sup> In addition, in January 1996, China's willingness to use force in asserting its sovereignty led to a 90-minute gun battle between the Philippine Navy and the Chinese Navy in the Campones Island vicinity.<sup>200</sup> China consistently used its military might for coercive purposes and in some instances to execute its foreign policy. Hence, it could not be discounted the imminence of armed conflict in the SCS.

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<sup>195</sup> DJ Sta. Ana, "China Reclaiming Land in 5 Reefs?" *The Philippine Star*, sec. Headlines, June 13, 2014, <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2014/06/13/1334238/china-reclaiming-land-5-reefs>.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> Jaime Laude, "China Seen Risking Naval Confrontation with Spratly Claimants," *ABS-CBN News*, sec. Headline, October 26, 2014, <http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/nation/10/26/14/china-seen-risking-naval-confrontation-spratly-claimants>.

<sup>198</sup> James Hardy and Sean O'Connor, "China Build another Island in the Spratlys," *IHS Jane's Defense Weekly*, sec. Security, September 30, 2014, <http://www.janes.com/article/43757/china-builds-another-island-in-south-china-sea>.

<sup>199</sup> Greg Torode, "Spratly Island Dispute Defines China-Vietnam Relation 25 Years After Naval Clash," *South China Morning Post*, sec. News, March 17, 2013, <http://www.scmp.com/news/asia/article/1192472/spratly-islands-dispute-defines-china-vietnam-relations-25-years-after>.

<sup>200</sup> Marlay, *China, the Philippines, and the Spratly Islands*, 195–210.

Currently, China adopts a coercive strategy stance combining increased aggressive military operations in the SCS, with corresponding subtle diplomatic gestures to targeted states. Its strategy is to take possession of islands, reefs, and outcrops in the South China Sea through a calculated use of intimidation but avoiding any major confrontation. Evidently, China has implemented a unique area denial operations and active non-lethal confrontation tactics in the SCS; its objective is to enforce positive control over contested islands and invoke regional supremacy. Its strategy has earned the monikers ‘salami slicing’ and ‘cabbage strategies.’ These two contemporary strategies gain notoriety for its efficiency in the execution of China’s core strategy of controlling the SCS. China’s action escalated the conflict at the SCS in a different perspective. The effective control of China over the SCS created a domino effect that transcended from a regional to a worldwide proportion.

Robert Haddick describes China’s ‘salami strategy’ “as the slow accumulation of small actions, none of which is a casus belli, but which add up over time to a major strategic change.”<sup>201</sup> China had preconceived military overtures in the SCS burden that affected its adversary’s execution of persuasive intervening military actions. By employing this strategy, China rationalizes its actions and transferred the burden of unjustifiable intervention toward its adversary. The Chinese policy put its adversary into an adamant position in countering its ambiguous actions, which in turn lead to a non-action of its adversary. Haddick explains

A salami-slicer puts the burden of disruptive action on his adversary. That adversary will be in the uncomfortable position of drawing seemingly unjustifiable red lines and engaging in indefensible brinkmanship.<sup>202</sup>

In April 2012, a Philippine Navy (PN) Frigate, Gregorio Del Pilar, apprehended Chinese Fishermen for illegally harvesting corals and capturing endangered species in the Scarborough Shoal located 125 nautical miles from Philippine coasts and 500 miles from

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<sup>201</sup> Robert Haddick, “Salami Slicing in the South China Sea,” *Foreign Policy Magazine*, August 3, 2012, [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/08/03/salami\\_slicing\\_in\\_the\\_south\\_china\\_sea](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/08/03/salami_slicing_in_the_south_china_sea).

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

the nearest Chinese port.<sup>203</sup> China accused the Philippines of militarizing of what should have been a law enforcement action that legitimized China's use of force. A two-month faceoff ensued between the PN frigate against a 90-vessel Chinese armada consisting of maritime surveillance ships and fishing boats. The Chinese has coerced the Philippines in releasing the captured fishermen and deceived the Philippines in ending the standoff through a combined strategy of diplomatic and military gambits.<sup>204</sup> The tense standoff ended in June of 2012, when the U.S. intervened. Allegedly, the three nations made a compromise wherein the Philippine and Chinese naval vessels were to disengage in the standoff and leave Scarborough Shoal.<sup>205</sup> Regrettably, the deal did not materialize, as China deceptively maintained its maritime presence in the shoal stating that they never signed a written agreement. As a result, China compromised the Philippines' sovereignty. As of this time, China maintains an effective control of the Scarborough Shoal and its surrounding waters through a continuous naval presence. Since this incident, China has effectively used the salami slicing in controlling the SCS and gained a slight geopolitical upper hand. Haddick asserts that China has placed the U.S. in a dilemma, as he stated:

Both the global and U.S. economies depend on freedom of navigation through the sea; \$5.3 trillion of global trade passes through the South China Sea each year, \$1.2 trillion of which passes through U.S. ports. Second, the United States has a strong interest in preventing any power from unilaterally rewriting well-established international maritime law to its liking. Finally, the credibility of the U.S. alliance system and its reliability as a security partner will be at stake.<sup>206</sup>

In another effort to maintain a tight control of the SCS, China operationalized its 'cabbage strategy.' Major General Zhang Zhaozhong of the PLA disclosed China's 'cabbage strategy' to recover all contested islands and reefs allegedly owned by China

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<sup>203</sup> Rodel Rodis, "China's Salami-Slicing Cabbage Strategy to Seize PH Islands and Reefs," *The Philippine Daily Inquirer*, sec. Global Nation, June 3, 2013, <http://globalnation.inquirer.net/76323/chinas-cabbage-strategy-to-recover-chinese-islands-reefs-illegally-occupied-by-ph/>.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> Haddick, *Salami Slicing in the South China Sea*, n/d.

that were illegally occupied by the Philippines publicly.<sup>207</sup> Taking a cue from the recent Scarborough Shoal victory, China has effectively used its combined maritime forces to blockade the areas around the shoal. He described the active role of the fishing administration ships and maritime surveillance ships in providing an outward perimeter naval blockade while its flotilla of Chinese vessels served as its secondary and inner security. Thus, the Chinese surrounded a targeted island like a ‘cabbage,’ minimizing the probability of intrusion. Zhaozhong revealed China’s plan of resorting to this calculated strategy to recapture inadequately manned islands and reefs occupied by other states.<sup>208</sup> He argues that by employing this strategy to undermanned outposts, China can effectively blockade resupply operation of the targeted island.<sup>209</sup>

On May 8, 2013, three Chinese naval ships arrived at the Philippine-occupied Second Thomas Shoal and operationalized its ‘cabbage strategy.’<sup>210</sup> The shoal, located 105 nautical miles west of Palawan Island and situated within the 200-mile exclusive economic zone of the Philippines, served as an access to the oil and mineral-rich Reed Bank. A small contingent of Philippine marines guarded the reef aboard a WW II-era vessel, the *BRP Sierra Madre*, a commissioned Philippine Navy ship, grounded intentionally in the Second Thomas Shoal in 1999 as a response to China’s unlawful occupation of Mischief Reef in 1995.<sup>211</sup> It served as a permanent GPH installation that symbolized the sovereignty of the Philippines over the shoal. China’s imposition of its ‘cabbage strategy’ over the reef affected the resupply of the marines, and China threatened to tow the vessel away. In response, the Philippines warned China that an aggressive action in the reef constituted an aggressive action against the Philippines that

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<sup>207</sup> Chankaiyee2, “China Boasts of Strategy to Recover Islands Occupied by the Philippines,” *China Daily Mail*, May 28, 2013, <http://chinadailymail.com/2013/05/28/china-boasts-of-strategy-to-recover-islands-occupied-by-philippines/>.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

<sup>210</sup> Rodis, “China’s Salami-Slicing Cabbage Strategy to Seize PH Islands and Reefs,” n.d.

<sup>211</sup> Christine O. Avendano, “China Warned: Don’t Try to Tow Away BRP Sierra Madre,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, sec. Global Nation, April 4, 2014, <http://globalnation.inquirer.net/101624/china-warned-dont-try-to-tow-away-brp-sierra-madre/>.

triggered the United States to act in accordance with the provision of the 1951 MDT.<sup>212</sup> Philippines law professor Harry Roque, an international law expert, explained that the Second Thomas Shoal was part of the Philippine's continental shelf that conferred its sovereign rights and jurisdiction, and the presence of a Philippine commissioned ship in the reef made the provisions of the MDT applicable.<sup>213</sup>

China's Asia-Pacific expansion, specifically in the Southeast Asian region, will continue to persist specifically in the SCS. The presence of numerous interconnecting key SLOC and chokepoints in the Southeast Asian region make it strategically significant to global and regional players. The strategic geopolitical and economic importance of the SCS functions as the influencing factors why states compete for its control. The SCS serves as a critical link between the Pacific and Indian Oceans. It functions as the main trade route and logistical route of oil and gas supply for the regional powers like China, South Korea, and Japan. In terms of economic significance, the SCS projects an important source of oil and fisheries supply. From a military perspective, the SCS serves as a strategic control area for China in the protection of its main supply route, and as a forward operating zone for its quest for Asia-Pacific expansion. Thus, China would maintain its stance of the non-negotiability of the SCS issue and its claim of indisputable sovereignty over the area. As part of its long-term strategy, the China threat will continue to persist and change the security outlook in the SCS.

The GPH acknowledges that the SCS issue and China's assertive expansion needs a multilateral solution. In his statement, Philippine President Benigno Aquino III said, "we cannot agree to bilateral talks to solve the problem because we think the problem is multilateral, a multilateral problem has to be settled multilaterally."<sup>214</sup> The GPH is aware that the dispute involves several states with overlapping EEZ. It is worth noting the Southeast Asian region is composed of archipelagic nations in which bodies of water define boundaries. In this aspect, a bilateral negotiation with any state in the resolution of

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<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

<sup>214</sup> Rick Gladstone, "Philippines Concerned about China, Leader Says," *New York Times*, September 24, 2014.

the dispute is futile. Furthermore, the GPH is aware that China has consistently pronounced its unwillingness for the negotiation of the SCS issue. In diplomatic parlance, China's action manifests a non-negotiable posture; however, China conveys willingness for a cooperative talk without any states laying claims on the SCS.

In the meantime, the Philippines employ the "Triple Action Plan" (TAP). The TAP comprises three simultaneous approaches aimed to address the escalating tensions and to resolve maritime disputes peacefully in the South China Sea and the West Philippine Sea through arbitration. The Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) announces its contemporary specific approach where it would call for immediate stoppage of tension-escalating activities such as massive reclamation, the prompt implementation of the code of conduct and acknowledgement of the 2002 ASEAN-China Declaration on Conduct of the Parties in the South China Sea, and establishment of an international law-based mechanism to manage and resolve the SCS dispute.<sup>215</sup>

On September 29, 2014, Foreign Affairs Secretary, Albert F. Del Rosario, pursued the support of UN Member States for the Philippines during the general debate of the 69th session of the UN General Assembly.<sup>216</sup> Del Rosario cited current destabilizing activity in the SCS that threatens peace, security, and stability in the region and specifically stressed China's coercive occupation of Scarborough Shoal, massive land reclamation in some contested reefs in the Spratlys area, and imposition of fishing restrictions that violate Philippine sovereignty and its legal rights to utilize its EEZ and continental shelf.<sup>217</sup> He explained that China's activities infringed upon the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and opposed the 2002 ASEAN-China Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea.<sup>218</sup> He emphasized that China's assertion of its expansive claim of irrefutable control over the SCS in the form of

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<sup>215</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs, "Philippines Seeks UN Support for Triple Action Plan to Resolve Maritime Disputes," Department of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.dfa.gov.ph/index.php/2013-06-27-21-50-36/dfa-releases/4201-philippines-seeks-un-support-for-triple-action-plan-to-resolve-maritime-disputes>.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.



the nine-dash line position as the core issue of the dispute.<sup>219</sup> The Philippines believes that the resolution of dispute depends on the result of the filed arbitration in the UN that will clarify the maritime entitlements and will pave the way for the full resolution of the maritime disputes in the South China Sea.<sup>220</sup>

### **3. The CNN and the Philippine Communist Insurgency**

The contemporary Philippine Communist Insurgency (PCI) led by the CNN is the longest running communist insurgency in the world.<sup>221</sup> The GPH considers the CNN as the most potent internal security threat.<sup>222</sup> The CNN insurgency traces its roots from the defeated HUK insurgency in the late 1950. Rectifying from the mistakes of the HUK insurgency, the CNN managed to evolve into an organized and cohesive organization. Relatively, the CNN's transformation was a result of defensive response of its leadership to counter the various counterinsurgency strategy executed by the GPH.

The CNN is composed of a party, a unified front, and an army: the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), the National Democratic Front (NDF), and the New People's Army (NPA). The CPP founded in 1968 by Jose Maria Sison aligns with the combined principles of Mao Zedong's 'peasant's war' and Marxist-Leninist "revolutionary working class struggle." Using a combined Maoist-Marxist-Leninist dictum, the CNN wages an enduring armed and political struggle efficiently against the GPH. Its armed component, the NPA, continues to wage a protracted war in the countryside using the peasantry as a mass base and a source of guerilla fighters. The Protracted People's War uses the peasantry in the armed and political struggles encompassing the cities from the rural area as a core strategy to overthrow the regime and seize the political control.

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<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

<sup>221</sup> Lysander Suerte, *Philippines 2010 and Beyond: The Need for Institutional Peace-Building*, Shedden Papers ed. (Australia: Australian Department of Defense, 2010), 1–30.  
<http://www.defence.gov.au/adc/docs/publications2010/>.

<sup>222</sup> Nikko Dizon, "NPA Still the most Potent Threat-AFP," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, sec. News, January 18, 2014, <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/565539/npa-still-the-most-potent-threat-afp>.

For the first quarter in 2013, the AFP estimated the number of NPA members at 4,386 with 5,192 firearms affecting 1,083 villages. The provinces in the Eastern Mindanao composed the high concentration of affected villages where exploitable socio-political and economic issues abound and used by the NPA in its expansion and recruitment activities. The NPA heightened its attacks initiating 230 violent incidents attributed to the CPP directive to conduct tactical offensives. This directive is in connection with the stalled peace talks and the election period that provided the NPA and opportunity to support its fielded political candidates and conduct financial extortions. In addition, the NPA heightened tactical offensives on private security agencies and business firms in this area increases its number of high-powered firearms. In addition, the NPA acquires firearms from politicians as payment for the permit to campaign policy that allows them a free-access in the guerilla zone.

The NDF served as a legal front and umbrella of various sectoral and mass groups it organized in the urban area. As a connected network, the CNN efficiently focused on overthrowing and replacing the present government with a national democratic system with a socialist perspective. It torments the GPH incessantly using its network in executing a combined armed and political struggle. In furtherance of its specific objective, the CNN through the NDF saw the excellent opportunity of advancing its strategic goal through a parliamentary struggle as provided by the GPH. The enactment of Republic Act 7941, Party-List System Act, legalized the representation of marginalized and underrepresented sectors, organizations, and parties in the Philippine Congress.<sup>223</sup> In connection with this, the CNN mobilized the NDF in consolidating and legitimizing its aboveground and underground component to participate in the parliamentary struggle by participating in national and local elections. The CNN unifies and legitimizes its underground and aboveground fronts to be able to participate on these democratic exercises. In the 2013 election, the CNN has successfully fielded political candidates. In the 2013 election, five out of nine CNN-supported party list groups, identified as the Makabayan Coalition, won which authorized them to occupy a total of

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<sup>223</sup> Commission on Election, "Republic Act no. 7941," Commission on Election, <http://www.comelec.gov.ph/?r=References/RelatedLaws/ElectionLaws/RA7941>.

seven congressional seats.<sup>224</sup> The coalition includes the CNN-supported legal front group of the NDF that comprises Bayan Muna, Kabataan party-list, ACT Teachers party-list, GABRIELA Women's party list, and Anak Pawis.<sup>225</sup> Likewise, the CNN also supported 57 local candidates, 23 of them elected in different political positions. The entry of the communist leaning party-list groups and several key personalities in the pillars of the GPH provided a new political dynamics in the Philippines.

At present, recent CPP directives guide the current thrusts of the CNN. The CPP issued the "Seven Task Points" during the CPP's 45th Founding Anniversary on December 26, 2013, and the "Ten Fighting Tasks" prescribed during the 45th NPA founding anniversary on March 29, 2014. The two directives revealed the CNN emphasis on the active role of its united front. The CNN heightened its focus on the exploitation of major socio-political and economic issues, the creation of anti-government coalitions and the conduct of mass protests that manifests its intent to discredit the GPH. Currently, the CNN concentrates on alleged corruption of high-level government officials, mismanagement of government funds by some government agencies, and the Philippine-U.S. alliance that they consider as an infringement to the Philippine sovereignty. The CNN tasked the NDF to execute its current thrust by sending several sectoral groups numbering to 5,000 to join the the 60,000 strong anti-government coalition's group protest rally in condemning the misuse of government funds by some high-level government officials.<sup>226</sup> Recently, numerous CNN-affiliated sectoral groups spearheaded condemnation rallies together with various groups and sectors against the alleged murder of a Filipino transgender by U.S. Marine personnel in Subic, Philippines.<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> Gil Cabacungan, "Militants in House Mull Over Cutting Ties with the Majority," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, sec. News, June 17, 2013, <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/427607/militants-in-house-mull-over-cutting-ties-with-the-majority>.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

<sup>226</sup> Rosemarie Francisco, "Tens of Thousands of Filipinos Protest Pork Barrel Funds," *Reuters*, sec. Politics, August 26, 2013, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/08/26/uk-philippines-politics-idUKBRE97P01Q20130826>.

<sup>227</sup> Helen Flores, "LGBT Groups Demand Justice for Jennifer," *The Philippine Star*, sec. Headlines, October 15, 2014, <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2014/10/15/1380341/lgbt-groups-demand-justice-jennifer>.

Consequently, the CNN's affiliated sectoral fronts condemn the EDCA and the Philippine-U.S. alliance during their protest actions.<sup>228</sup>

The CNN showed a significant decline in initiated violent activities in the first quarter of 2014 apparently caused by a shift in policy from an armed struggle towards the parliamentary struggle. Nevertheless, most of the CNN's violent and non-violent activities focus on harassment, liquidations, and arsons to implement its extortion activities. The NPA as the coercive force continue to engage in extortion activities targeting business firms, politicians, and private personalities. In its fundraising activity, the NPA uses intimidation and violence targeting mining firms, companies involved in infrastructure projects and agricultural businesses. For the past years, the CNN drive to increase its financial capacity continues unabated. As a result, the CNN maintains its capacity to expand and recruit members despite the intensified counterinsurgency effort of the GPH. The unrestricted financial position of the CNN provides sustenance on its effort to recover loss mass base. For now, the CNN slowly consolidates its mass base by concentrating on Ideological, Political, and Organizational (IPO) works in the areas recently recovered by the government forces and in calamity-stricken areas.

Yet, the CNN's financial capacity that contributes to its resiliency for four decades remain unrestrained by the GPH. The CNN has effectively pressured the GPH to dissuade from curtailing its financial capacity. The CNN financial capacity breeds and sustains the resilient communist Insurgency in the Philippines. Justus Van Der Kroef argues that, "another criterion by which to measure the Philippine Communists' ability to 'stalemate' the government strategically, and a good index to communist strength generally is the movement's financial resource."<sup>229</sup> In addition, Michael Freeman claims, "without money, terrorists can neither function as organizations, nor conduct attacks."<sup>230</sup> He further asserts the need for governments to understand the financial complexities and

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<sup>228</sup> Matikas Santos, "Public Pressure Against EDCA Seen if..." *Inquirer.Net*, sec. Global Nation, October 15, 2014, <http://globalnation.inquirer.net/112641/public-pressure-against-edca-seen-if/>.

<sup>229</sup> Van Der Kroef, Justus M, "Aquino and the Communists: A Philippine Strategic Stalemate?" *World Affairs* (1988): 117–129.

<sup>230</sup> Michael Freeman, *Financing Terrorism: Case Studies* (Farnham; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 256.

vulnerabilities of terrorist financing to combat terrorist organizations effectively.<sup>231</sup> Hence, there is a dire need for the GPH to focus on the financial capacity of the CNN. However, the GPH failed to disrupt the insurgent's financial resources and the CNN even benefitted from the Philippine administrator's actions. The Corazon Aquino regime invokes a political stance of a more pluralistic and democratic life which benefited the financial ability of the insurgents.<sup>232</sup> In 1995, President Fidel Ramos, as a gesture of sincerity for the peace treaty with the insurgents, legalized the CNN by signing into law Republic Act 7636, which repealed Republic Act 1700 or better known as the Anti-Subversion Act of 1957. The GPH's action further benefited the CNN operationally and financially, and impaired the counterinsurgency effort. Only in one instance did the GPH formally investigate the financial ability of the CNN. In June 1998, the Philippine Senate conducted an inquiry on the nationwide rampant 'taxation' of the NPA on businessmen, farmers, fish pond owners, logging, transport companies, and other enterprises.<sup>233</sup> For several years, the government failed to execute comprehensive legal action to counter the financial operations of the CNN. Nonetheless, the GWOT resulted to the listing of the CNN in the Foreign Terrorist Organization and designated as "terrorist" by the U.S., Canada, Britain, and the European Union (E.U.) in 2001, 2002, and 2007. This action curbs the external support of the CNN. Yet, the GPH failed to capitalize and exploit the FTO listing of the CNN in neutralizing the insurgent's financial capacity. For the past years, there were no substantial reports of government's actions or success in Counter Financing against the CNN. The peace negotiation influences the GPH's subtle treatment on the CNN's financial capacity. The CNN listing as an FTO was a significant issue between the Government and the CNN.

On June 18, 2012, the Philippines enacted Republic Act No. 10168, The Terrorism Financing, Prevention, and Suppression Act of 2012, with an effective date of July 5, 2012. The law invoked terrorist financing a self-contained crime and empowered government enforcers of quick freezing of property or funds associated to financing

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<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

<sup>232</sup> Van Der Kroef, Justus M, *Aquino and the Communists: A Philippine Strategic Stalemate?* 122.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid.

terrorism or acts of terrorism that also includes the property or funds of individuals and entities on the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1267/1989 and 1988 consolidated lists.<sup>234</sup> Similarly, the Republic Act No. 10167 that was signed into law on June 18 and took effect on July 6, 2012, amended the Anti-Money Laundering Act of 2001 that empowered the Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC) to secretly inquire on banks for a limited period of time and allow courts to issue freeze orders on identified assets.<sup>235</sup> Nevertheless, the Philippines government is more vulnerable in the non-profit sector when implementing these laws. The government lacks single supervisory authority responsible for monitoring and coordinating financial transactions of entities in the non-profit sector.<sup>236</sup> The existing non-profit regulatory bodies are inefficient in monitoring due to inadequate coordination and shortage of resources.<sup>237</sup>

The CNN takes advantage of the vulnerability of the GPH by enhancing its lifeline. The CNN taps its two major components the NDF in the legal aspect of acquiring funds, and the NPA in conducting coercive illegal activities.<sup>238</sup> The CPP central committee orders the NPA to conduct the extortion on the masses, businesses, and local politicians, while the NDF transacts external funding from foreign funding agencies and non-governmental organizations.<sup>239</sup> Various government agencies estimate the CNN fund raising activities accumulated PHP 1,660,000,000.00 (USD 144 Million) in a span of ten

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<sup>234</sup> Official Gazette, “Republic Act no. 10168 - an Act Defining the Crime of Financing Terrorism,” *Official Gazette*, <http://www.gov.ph/2012/06/18/republic-act-no-10168/>.

<sup>235</sup> Official Gazette, “Republic Act no. 10167 - an Act to further Strengthen the Anti-Money Laundering Law, Amending for the Purpose Sections 10 and 11 of Republic Act no. 9160,” *Official Gazette*, <http://www.gov.ph/2012/07/02/republic-act-no-10167/>.

<sup>236</sup> Bureau of Counterterrorism, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2012* (United States: United States Department of Publication, 2013).

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>238</sup> Zachary Abuza, *The Philippines Internal and External Security Challenges* (Barton, A.C.T.: Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 2012), 9. Yettan Verita Liwanag et al., “Political Deceptions by the CPP through the Party-List and Sectoral Groups,” in *Atrocities and Lies: The Untold Secret of the Communist Party of the Philippines* (Quezon City, Philippines: National alliance for Democratic and Freedom, Inc., 2009d), 83.

<sup>239</sup> Yettan Verita Liwanag et al., “The Financial Cash Flows of the Communist Party of the Philippines,” in *Atrocities and Lies: The Untold Secret of the Communist Party of the Philippines* (Quezon City, Philippines: National Alliance for Democracy and Freedom, Inc., 2009c), 187–206.

years (1987–2007).<sup>240</sup> The NPA extorts small and big corporations, kidnap individuals, rob establishments and impose a nationwide extortion to firms and with an annual collection of U.S. \$25 to \$45 Million in 1988.<sup>241</sup> In December 2010, the NPA imposed a U.S. \$450,000 a month extortion fee and supply of computers, communication equipment, and guns to several mining companies operating in CARAGA region.<sup>242</sup> In addition, during election periods, politicians are summoned to pay a fee or in kind for a ‘permit to campaign’ and ‘permit to win’ in certain guerilla zones.<sup>243</sup> The politicians either pay a certain amount of money or provide the insurgents with firearms, ammunitions, laptops, money-cards, communications equipment and other logistical materials worth millions of pesos.<sup>244</sup> The CNN propagates extortion activities as a legitimate system to sustain the armed revolution considered a form of payment of the masses to the CNN’s revolutionary services in providing livelihood projects and developing cooperatives in the rural and urban areas, fighting the reactionary government security forces and for the cost of land reform struggle. The NPA’s effectiveness in conducting extortions or what they called as “revolutionary taxation” is attributed to its harshness in employing death threats and assassinations of uncooperative peasants, businessmen and politicians; arsons, bombing, raids and confiscations of multinational firm’s buildings and equipment; and other forms of violence and criminal activities such as kidnappings of uncooperative individuals and robberies of businesses.<sup>245</sup> In 2010 and 2011, the NPA conducted 18 raids on mining firms in Mindanao as a show of force and punishment to non-payers of the revolutionary tax.<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> Yettan Verita Liwanag et al., *Atrocities and Lies: The Untold Secrets of the Communist Party of the Philippines* (Quezon City, Philippines: National Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Foundation, Inc., 2009a), 200–201.

<sup>241</sup> Van Der Kroef, *Aquino and the Communists: A Philippine Strategic Stalemate?*, 117–129.

<sup>242</sup> GMA News Online, “NPA Threatens 7 Mining Companies in CARAGA—AFP,” *GMA News Online*, sec. News, December 27, 2010, <http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/209225/news/regions/npa-threatens-7-mining-companies-in-caraga-afp>.

<sup>243</sup> Yettan Verita Liwanag et al., “The Destruction of the Nation’s Economy through Extortions by the CPP,” in *Atrocities and Lies: The Untold Secrets of the Communist Party of the Philippines* (Quezon City, Philippines: National Alliance for Democracy and Freedom Foundation, Inc., 2009b), 109–113.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

<sup>246</sup> Abuza, *The Philippines : Internal and External Security Challenges*, 9.

The unabated CNN accumulation of financial resources traces back for decades. The NDF utilized its legal and semi-legal cloak to accumulate an annual income of U.S. \$ 8 to \$15 Million in 1987, from various external sources and non-government organizations of Australia, Europe, Asia, and North America.<sup>247</sup> The NDF managed to establish foreign financial resource network for the CNN through International Solidarity Works (ISW) and Overseas Revolutionary Works (ORW) with like-minded organizations.<sup>248</sup> Locally, the NDF uses its unified above and underground fronts such as trade union fronts, labor union groups, and church charitable organizations, as channels to generate fund support from international leftist groups and liberation movements.<sup>249</sup> The CNN further invested its collected funds through formation of cooperatives, venturing into small and large-scale industries and export ventures in the Philippine private sector. Moreover, the CNN funnels sixty percent of the solicited funds intended for legitimate income generating and community development projects.<sup>250</sup> For the period of 1996–2007, the CNN earned PHP 1.15 billion (USD 25.6 million) through extortion and an external funding of PHP 113.5 million (USD 2.5 million) for a four-year period in 1998–2001.<sup>251</sup> Its relentless extortion activities yielded PHP 130 million (USD 2.9 million) in 2009.<sup>252</sup> Accordingly, the CNN allots 10–20 percent of the money to its armed component, and the remaining 80–90 percent remains in the CPP National Finance Committee; a hefty part of it used to sustain their leaders abroad.<sup>253</sup> The CNN operates its army and unified fronts to generate revenue for self-sustainment. The financial capacity of the CNN enables them to operationalize and support planned strategic and tactical actions such as recruitment, expansion, mass mobilization, operational security,

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<sup>247</sup> Van Der Kroef, *Aquino and the Communists: A Philippine Strategic Stalemate?*, 117–129; Liwanag et al., *The Financial Cash Flows of the Communist Party of the Philippines*, 187–206.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid., 192–194.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid., 195–196.

<sup>252</sup> Francisco N. Cruz Jr., “The Eventual Demise of the Communist Insurgency in the Philippines,” *The Philippine Star*, sec. Other Sections, February 13, 2010, <http://www.philstar.com:8080/letters-editor/548852/eventual-demise-communist-insurgency-philippines>.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.



military engagement, political agitation and lobbying, and international solidarity works to achieve the objectives of the revolution.

In line with its political struggle, the CNN has used the peace talks as a means of creating maneuvering space. Since June 2011, the GPH-NDF Peace Talks maintain its stalemate status after the NDF requested for the postponement of the peace talks. The contentious issue that causes the stalemate is on the request of the unconditional release of all detained alleged Joint Agreement on Security and Immunity Guarantee (JASIG) protected NDF personalities. The JASIG is a key agreement in the peace negotiation that serves as a mechanism that safeguards and provides immunity to authorized CNN members involved in the negotiation.<sup>254</sup> Luis Jalandoni argued that the JASIG was impractical and accused the government of insincerity as it continues to arrest, allegedly torture, and kill JASIG-listed NDFP members.<sup>255</sup> However, the GPH counterclaims that the CNN members use the JASIG to its advantage to avoid arrest and prosecution. Top CNN leaders took undue advantage of the JASIG using it as a strategic instrument to conduct IPO activities. In several events, the CNN used the JASIG as an alibi to stalemate the peace talk and in pressuring the government to release arrested high valued CNN leaders and members.

The GPH's unyielding stance on prosecuting recently arrested top CPP-NPA leaders turns the tide against the CNN. The arrest of Benito and Wilma Tiamzon, the top leaders of the NPA and the other seven high value CNN personalities generated a setback in the movement as manifested by the softening of the CNN stance. On December 26, 2013, the CPP declared its intention not to pursue the peace negotiation with the Aquino regime citing multiple issues that includes but not limited to human rights violation, submission to U.S. foreign interest, corruption, and other environmental and social

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<sup>254</sup> OPAPP, "GPH-NDFP Joint Agreement Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG)/ February 24, 1995," Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace Process, <http://www.opapp.gov.ph/resources/gph-ndfp-joint-agreement-safety-and-immunity-guarantees-jasig-feb-24-1995>.

<sup>255</sup> Luis Jalandoni, "JASIG is a Key Agreement in the GRP/GPH-NDFP Peace Negotiations," Philippine Revolution Web Central, [http://www.philippinerevolution.net/statements/20120213\\_jasig-is-a-key-agreement-in-the-grp-gph-ndfp-peace-negotiations](http://www.philippinerevolution.net/statements/20120213_jasig-is-a-key-agreement-in-the-grp-gph-ndfp-peace-negotiations).

issues.<sup>256</sup> However, in a news report on October 20, 2014, the NDFP peace panel chair Luis Jalandoni expressed their willingness for the resumption of the peace talks with the GPH after their demand for the release of captured top communist leaders facing criminal cases failed.<sup>257</sup> The NDFP claimed that the provision of JASIG accorded immunity to the jailed CNN leaders for they work as peace consultants that made their capture illegal.<sup>258</sup> Nonetheless, the government negotiators in charge of the peace process disregarded the NDFP's argument, since most of the jailed rebels are using aliases.<sup>259</sup> As manifested in the past, the CNN would resort to political pressure using its united front to advance its strategic goal and in undermining the GPH counterinsurgency strategy. Political maneuvering such as this indicates the CNN's ability to influence the government.

## **B. THE PHILIPPINE-U.S. ALLIANCE OPPORTUNITY**

The dynamics in the global and regional security arena influenced the foreign policy of the U.S. and the Philippines. It presented an opportunity for both nations to align priorities to satisfy their national interests. This section highlights the opportunity of the alliance because of the U.S. strategic pivot in the Asia-Pacific region.

### **1. The U.S. Asia-Pacific Pivot**

For the first two decades of 2000, the Asia-Pacific region manifested a dynamic political, security, and economic atmosphere. China and India's economic and political rise remain unabated. In the East Asian region, Japan, South Korea, Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines promised a better outlook on their economic status. On security issues, the East Asian region had various interests ranging from the North Korean nuclear threat, transnational terrorism, territorial disputes, and China's assertive expansionism. The significant economic prospect and the security concerns influenced the U.S.

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<sup>256</sup> Carmela Fonbuena, "CPP Gives Up on Peace Talks, Calls for Aquino Ouster," *Rappler*, sec. Latest News, December 27, 2013, <http://www.rappler.com/nation/46761-cpp-gives-up-peace-talks>.

<sup>257</sup> Alexis Romero, "Communist Rebels. GPH to Discuss Resumption of Peace Talks," *The Philippine Star*, sec. Headlines, October 20, 2014, <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2014/10/20/1382411/communist-rebels-gph-discuss-resumption-peace-talks>.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

government to rebalance towards the Asia-Pacific region. The de-escalation of conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan in the early 2010 further persuaded the U.S. to realign its foreign policy towards the Asia-Pacific. Thus, in 2012, the U.S. articulated in its strategic guidance a strategic pivot towards the Asia-Pacific region. Its primordial aim is to secure common interests through strengthening existing alliances and expansion of networks that ensure a collective capability and capacity.<sup>260</sup> The strategic guidance conveyed the role of the U.S. in the maintenance of peace, stability, and the free flow of commerce and the maintenance of its influence. Its success would depend on the balance of U.S. military capability and presence in the Asia-Pacific region.<sup>261</sup> The U.S. intends to maintain its presence and access within the region, and it will continue to work with its allies and keep its treaty obligation.<sup>262</sup> However, present trend shows that the conflict in Iraq is escalating and that the Afghanistan conflict is likely to intensify as U.S. troops starts to withdraw. These events may affect the U.S. strategic pivot to the Asia-Pacific region.

The U.S. strategic pivot matters most to the Philippines. Filipino leaders believed that the U.S. presence in the Asia-Pacific would balance the supremacy of China and influence the territorial and maritime disputes in the Asia-Pacific. The threat of transnational terrorist also influenced the Philippines to engage the U.S. in various bilateral dialogues. In June 2009, the Philippines and the U.S. defense officials convened in the Philippine-U.S. Strategic Dialogue in Manila. The dialogue facilitated the discussion and cooperation on security strategic issues among defense officials from the U.S. and the Philippines. The dialogue complements the robust military-to-military cooperation between Philippines and U.S. forces, as outcomes of the dialogue would provide policy guidance to MDB-SEB activities. The bilateral strategic dialogue centered on bilateral alliance concerns, and regional and global issues focusing on defense and security. This framework is essential in the formulation of roadmaps on critical military

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<sup>260</sup> Panetta et al., *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership Priorities for 21st Century Defense*, 1, online resource, 16.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid.

issues such as the assessment and review of the relevance and future of the JSOTF-P and transition of Internal Security Operations to Territorial Defense.

Prior to the U.S. strategic pivot to the Asia-Pacific, the U.S. and the Philippines had already initiated the strengthening of their security cooperation caused by the threat of terrorism and Chinese military adventurism in the South China Sea. As the U.S. rebalance in the Asia-Pacific region, strengthening the tie with the Philippines has become a priority. The U.S. security commitment with the Philippines bounded by the MDT would test the dynamics of the alliance. In connection with this, both parties reached for a political consensus to strengthen the alliance. On November 16, 2011, in time of the 60th anniversary of the Philippine-U.S. MDT of 1951, Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, and Philippine Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Albert F. Del Rosario, signed the “Manila Declaration” that reaffirmed the treaty as the foundation of the existing bilateral security relationship between the U.S. and the Philippines.<sup>263</sup> It reaffirmed the parties’ obligation under the MDT. The declaration also promotes the sustained cooperation on counterterrorism, regional security, and economic partnership. Furthermore, it also reaffirmed transparency and rule of law. Moreover, in her speech, Clinton asserted that the U.S. stance on neutrality in the regional territorial disputes, national interest in freedom of navigation, and multilateral peaceful solutions of maritime disputes through diplomatic processes were in line with established international law.<sup>264</sup> Rhetorically, she further stated, “the United States will always be in the corner of the Philippines, and we will stand and fight with you.”<sup>265</sup> The declaration fortified the Philippine-U.S. alliance and consequently its frameworks of engagements enhanced the ability of the parties to respond and challenge existential traditional and non-traditional. The Philippines in particular boosted its armed forces capacity through these frameworks. It elevated the Armed Forces of the Philippines credibility as an alliance partner.

On April 8, 2012, Philippine and Chinese maritime security forces engaged in a standoff in the Scarborough Shoal located 120 nautical miles from Manila’s west coast.

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<sup>263</sup> Lum and Niksch, *The Republic of the Philippines: Background and U.S. Relations*, 27.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid.

The event triggered the convening of the first United States-Philippines Ministerial Dialogue. On April 30, 2012, a Two-Plus-Two Ministerial Consultations transpired in Washington, D.C., between the U.S. and the Philippines representatives. The meeting highlights the U.S. pledge to honor its obligations under the MDT. It also set the Philippines-U.S. activities and exercises standards to have a high impact and great value on responding to maritime security concerns and natural disasters. The meeting also guaranteed the Philippines a \$30 Million increase in Foreign Military Financing (FMF) for 2013 and the prioritization of the Philippines in Excess Defense Article (EDA) grants. The meeting also stipulated the future transfer of JSOTF-P capabilities to the AFP. For the alliance to become more efficient, the meeting also demands a greater and facilitated information sharing. It also orders the United States to provide naval and air assets in a rotational basis to serve as capability gap fillers for the Philippines. To sum it all, the ministerial meeting seeks to improve the Philippine-U.S. security relations and most importantly, to develop a credible defense posture for the Philippines.

Recently, the U.S. and the Philippines marked another milestone in enhancing the alliance. On April 28, 2014, Philippine Secretary of National Defense, Voltaire Gazmin, and U.S. Ambassador, Philip Goldberg, signed the 10-year Philippines-United States Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (Philippine-U.S. EDCA). The EDCA, anchored on the 1951 MDT and 1998 VFA, restated the peaceful resolution of international disputes through legal means, while prohibiting the use of force by the parties involved. As an implementing guideline of the MDT and VFA, it envisioned to advance the implementation of the MDT. The EDCA allows the entry of U.S. military troops for exercises, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief operations, as stated in the Philippine-US MDB-SEB of the 1998 VFA. It authorizes the co-location of U.S. troops in specified Armed Forces of the Philippines facilities. It also permits the United States increased deployment of troops, ships, aircraft, and humanitarian equipment in the Philippines. Moreover, the EDCA promotes the AFP capacity building meant to enhance its ability to confront traditional and non-traditional threats. In his speech, Ambassador Goldberg asserts that the EDCA “supports the shared goal of promoting the long-term modernization of the AFP, and will to help the AFP maintain and develop maritime

security, maritime domain awareness, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief capabilities.”<sup>266</sup> He further states that the agreement respects the Philippine Sovereignty and the non-establishment of permanent U.S. presence.<sup>267</sup> According to Secretary Gazmin, the agreement deepened the Philippine-U.S. relationship and as a framework, it enhanced the alliance.<sup>268</sup> He further stated that the Philippine-U.S. alliance and mechanisms continually evolve in order to cope up with the complexity of defense and security challenges.<sup>269</sup>

The signing of the EDCA stirs the Philippine public opinion. The Filipino nationalists and the liberal group question the constitutionality and one-sidedness of the EDCA. In one news commentary, it says that the “EDCA is a document so detestable it makes a mockery of the Philippine Constitution and ridicules Philippine Sovereignty.”<sup>270</sup> In one of the provisions of the EDCA allows the U.S. sovereignty over a precise location inside a Philippine military camp that curtails inaccessibility to Philippine officials in the absence of the U.S. consent. It connotes the violation of one of the elements of the state of sovereignty that is the supreme right of the state to command obedience within the state. Furthermore, Senator Miriam Santiago insists that the EDCA need the Senate concurrence to ensure that the agreement is in pursuance to the Philippines national interests.<sup>271</sup> Santiago cited:

The 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, Art 46, provided that if a state’s consent to be bound by a treaty had been expressed in violation of its constitution, the state may invoke that violation as a ground

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<sup>266</sup> Ambassador Philip S. Goldberg, “Speech of the U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines during the Signing of the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement” (speech in Manila, Philippines, April 28, 2014).

<sup>267</sup> Ibid.

<sup>268</sup> Voltaire Gazmin, “Speech of the Philippine Secretary of National Defense during the Signing of the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement” (speech in Manila, Philippines, April 28, 2014).

<sup>269</sup> Ibid.

<sup>270</sup> Ellen Tordesillas, “EDSA: A Mockery of the Constitution,” *Yahoo! News*, sec. The Inbox, May 7, 2014, 2014, <https://ph.news.yahoo.com/blogs/the-inbox/edca-mockery-constitution-110843868.html>.

<sup>271</sup> Sun Star Manila, “Santiago Sees SC Declaring EDCA Unconstitutional,” *Sun Star Manila*, sec. Local News, May 8, 2014, <http://www.sunstar.com.ph/manila/local-news/2014/05/08/santiago-sees-sc-declaring-edca-unconstitutional-341875>.

for invalidating its consent, if the violation was manifest and concerned a rule of internal law of fundamental importance.<sup>272</sup>

She further asserts that there are three constitutional provisions that contradict the EDCA. First, there is a provision that “no treaty or international agreement shall be valid and effective unless concurred in by at least two-thirds of all the Members of the Senate” (Constitution, Art. 7, Sec. 21).<sup>273</sup> Second, there is a provision that: “after the expiration in 1991 of the Agreement between the Republic of the Philippines and the United States of American concerning Military Bases, foreign military bases, troops, or facilities, shall not be allowed in the Philippines except under a treaty duly concurred in by the Senate” (Constitution, Art. 18, Sec. 25).<sup>274</sup> Third, there is a provision that “the Philippines, consistent with the national interest, adopts and pursues a policy of freedom from nuclear weapons in its territory” (Constitution, Art. 2, Sec. 8).<sup>275</sup>

The GPH advocates that the EDCA be in line with the constitution for it merely implements the established government policies in the 1951 MDT and the 1998 VFA.<sup>276</sup> Nonetheless, various interested groups and individuals filed three petitions in the Philippine Supreme court to challenge the constitutionality of the EDCA.<sup>277</sup> Petitioners various claims includes the violation of the constitutional provisions on the “preferential use of Filipino labor and domestic materials; tax exemption; national sovereignty, territorial integrity, and national interest; freedom from nuclear weapons; role of the judiciary in settling disputes; autonomy of local government units; and treaties with other countries, specifically, military treaties.”<sup>278</sup> The final passage of the EDCA met with backlashes from both the government legislative bodies and private interested groups.

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<sup>272</sup> Ibid.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid.

<sup>276</sup> Philippine Information Agency, “Palace Defends EDCA, Says Agreement Does Not Violate Constitution,” Philippine Information Agency, <http://news.pia.gov.ph/article/view/1781410014915/palace-defends-edca-says-agreement-does-not-violate-constitution>.

<sup>277</sup> Ina Reformina, “SC Gets 3rd Petition Vs EDCA,” *ABS-CBN News*, sec. News, September 7, 2014, <http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/nation/06/27/14/sc-gets-3rd-petition-vs-edca>.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid.

The foremost obstacle to the EDCA is the left leaning progressive Filipino nationalists groups fighting for their respective principles. Compared to past parallel cases, the EDCA will undergo relentless scrutiny to ensure its constitutionality. As in previous cases, the EDCA presents an exploitable issue for the political posturing and battle cry for the interested groups.

### **C. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION**

The GWOT and the fight against the ASG in Southern Philippines is a shared threat for the alliance members. The transnational character of the terrorist group and its link to AQ and JI make it a legitimate target for both the United States and the Philippines. In line with Walt's definition of the alliance, the ASG is a security commitment for the alliance to confront which will allow the alliance members to reap mutual benefits. A combined effort between the Philippine and U.S. forces in terms of resources exchange and capacity development is expected to confront this threat. As discussed in this chapter, the alliance became more potent as the alliance capacity to confront the threat improved through joint training and increased foreign military aid to the Philippines. As Walt has asserted, the foreign aid and the presence of common interests made the alliance more efficient.

The threat of terrorism in the Southern Philippines functions as a cohering factor rather than as a liability to the alliance. The extremist terrorist groups are confined within certain areas in Southern Philippines and do not constitute an overall threat to the Philippines. The alliance establishment of counterterrorism objectives, operational mechanisms, and joint development project ensures the continuous clipping of the Islamic terrorist organizations operating in Mindanao. The ongoing peace process between the GPH and the MILF would serve as a buffer in the possible merging of terrorism and secessionism ideology. However, the GPH must be wary that the failure of the peace process and the failure to disarm the MILF would be catastrophic to the internal security. The GPH and the alliance must continue to seek mechanisms and establish contingencies. It would ensure that the Philippines are well prepared with an active stance and would not resort to hasty reactionary actions.



The overwhelming, threatening power, aggressive intent, and proximity of China, influenced the Philippines to balance with the United States. This is in consonance with Walt's balance of threat theory. China poses a significant threat to the Philippine sovereignty so that it needs a greater power to balance against this threat, not based on regional or global power, but on the aspect of the threat.

China's assertive expansion is a shared threat of the alliance. The China threat undermines the Philippine-U.S. alliance and challenges the national interests of the United States and the Philippines. Significantly, China's threat is a complicated and lingering problem for the alliance to confront. The governments of the United States and China have an existing strategic relation, which influences the decision making and action of the United States. For the Philippines, its economic ties with China affect the overall strategy in confronting the SCS dispute. The Armed Forces of the Philippines' inability to defend its territory due to its weak department aggravates the situation. Even with the presence of the alliance with the United States, the Philippines has to contend with other forms of dispute resolution. The Philippines has to discard military solutions. The present-day posture of the Philippines influences the Philippine-U.S. alliance strategy in dealing with the SCS issue. Maintaining a defensive posture is in line with the Philippine Constitution. Based on the constitution, the Philippines posture should always be on the defensive. It cannot initiate a war for the purpose of aggression, but it can respond to foreign aggression as a form of self-defense. Furthermore, it abides with the principles of international law, the UN Charter, and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation Southeast Asia that stipulates that international disputes must be settled through peaceful means.

From an alliance perspective, direct military action to disentangle the conflict is impractical but probable. China's aggressive military overtures could lead to a shooting war with other claimants in the SCS. China's wanton disregard of diplomatic and legal resolutions and its ambiguity on its stance in the SCS aggravate the dispute. Hence, the SCS dispute is a strategic problem that could disconnect the alliance depending on the steps taken by United States and the Philippines. As discussed, the China threat is a regional problem that needs a multilateral solution. If a multilateral solution is not

achieved, the SCS dispute will remain a potential flashpoint that can trigger a regional or global conflict.

Led by the CNN, the PCI is an unshared threat for the Philippine-U.S. alliance. Considered as the top security threat by the GPH, the CNN remains unprioritized in the alliance threat assessment. The unaligned threat assessment of the United States and the Philippines about the CNN affects the efficiency of the alliance. Of all the threats mentioned, the CNN stands as the immediate obstacle to the alliance. The CNN continues to pester the alliance with political actions and with its information campaign; the Philippine-U.S. military relationship is under constant attack and branded as the scourge of the Philippine society. The CNN and its network manage to influence the Filipino people to stand against the alliance, and it has continuously used it as a propaganda tool for the insurgency. The CNN's political arm has expanded through the years. Its influence has spread not only to the local level but also into the national level. The CNN's continuous rectification of its past mistakes has also enhanced its ability to wage a combined political and armed struggle against the GPH. Its recent thrust reveals its strength in the political arena as its unified legal front and networks managed to infiltrate GPH agencies and legislative systems. Using the party-list system and its unified legal system, it has managed to motivate and mobilize all sectors to include private and government ones. The political action is more dangerous than the armed struggle when it comes to the alliance. The presence of loopholes and ambiguity in the alliance serves as its weak points that the CNN can exploit. Thus, the CNN threat, particularly in the political conflict and its status as an unshared threat, serves as a potential disconnecting factor to the Philippine-U.S. alliance if it remains uncontested.

The United States' Asia-Pacific strategic pivot offers an opportunity for the strengthening of the Philippine-U.S. alliance. The Philippines and the United States for the past six decades continue to nurture their bilateral relationship. The ever-changing security challenges continue to hound and test the alliance's durability. The alliance's flexibility to cope up with these challenges manifests in its ability to create feasible mechanisms. However, as history shows, the problem of the interested groups will continue to batter the alliance's foundation and mechanisms. As long as the requirements

of the MDT of 1951 and other security implements are not resolved, the alliance will continue to suffer its effect. The vagueness of the provisions of the MDT could drag other mechanisms into its inefficacy. The non-alignment of the U.S. and Philippine perspectives on the alliance pummels the relationship. While most Filipinos have viewed the military alliance as a shield and sword in the event of external aggression, the Americans have manifested a non-commitment. Filipinos see the alliance as a one-sided affair which favors the United States and puts the Philippines at a greater risk. The Filipinos look at the alliance as a form of control in the U.S. strategic interest to use the Philippines as a buffer to constrain China.

The EDCA further solidified the Filipino belief that it does not obligate the United States to protect the Philippines in the event of war with China in the West Philippine Sea. The EDCA requires the Philippines and United States to resolve disputes between themselves without third-party interference, which is problematic for it requires exclusive high-level executive negotiations as the contrivances to settle disputes. Furthermore, the EDCA contributes to the further deterioration of the Philippine and Chinese relationship. The vague stance of the United States in the South China Sea conflict further emboldens China's assertive posturing and gunboat policy. The Philippines expects that with or without an alliance, the disputes could escalate into a higher level of conflict. On the positive side, the EDCA offers an opportunity for the Philippines to hasten its armed forces modernization in developing a credible defense force that can be achieved through U.S. military assistance. The public outcry of the interested groups should not hinder the primary aim of the EDCA of developing the AFP capacity by capitalizing on the U.S. assisted training and material support. The GPH must focus on its end goal of strengthening its armed forces and the Philippine-U.S. alliance. It must show resilience in confronting the challenge of the domestic socio-political upheaval caused by a minority group. What is important is the ability for the GPH to cope up with the dynamics of the foreign policy and international relations fluidity.

## **V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

Walt's balance of threat theory predicts the formation and management of the Philippine-U.S. alliance. The theory suggests that, given current trends, the Philippines and the United States will continue to rely on the alliance to achieve shared interests. The Philippines and United States are bound by a shared ideology, common existential threats, and the presence of mutual benefits, which ensures that the alliance will endure. The only misgiving with this theory is that it does not cover the effects of internal threats in the alliance. Nonetheless, the theory implies that the level of commitment would include the resolution of internal conflict that affects the alliance. Even so, Walt's theory explains the threat factor and other main principles that influence the dynamics of the Philippine-U.S. alliance.

Threats helps both ways that they can either strengthen or weaken the Philippine-U.S. alliance, thus they influence its direction. In summary, threats serve as a catalyst in the foundation, development, demise, and revitalization of the contemporary PH-U.S. alliance. In the positive aspect, history showed that threats are the primary factor in the founding and formalization of the alliance. Threat served as the impetus for the revitalization of the alliance in the early 2000s. In addition, the wide spectrums of threats have influenced the establishment and reformulation of alliance mechanisms. These mechanisms increased the efficiency of the alliance for they served as instruments of the alliance-members in executing their stated responsibility towards the achievement of their shared objectives. These mechanisms increased the aggregate power and efficiency of the PH-U.S. alliance because it paved the way to the development of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

However, threats can also undermine the alliance. The various threats that have challenged the alliance significantly prevented the achievement of its full potential. The uncoordinated approach of the alliance members with respect to the existential threats has created an atmosphere of distrust and ambiguity. Furthermore, the alliance has to deal with another type of problem in the form of challenge by political entities and domestic audience. These factors have weakened the posture of the alliance. Hitherto, traditional

and non-traditional threats have fueled the continuous operation of the alliance. As shown in this study, shared and unshared threats could serve as disconnecting factors in the alliance. Hence, the threats affecting the alliance in a different purview need a different approach.

The China threat constitutes a disconnecting element to the alliance. China's actions and the South China Sea (SCS) dispute can be viewed as a political rather than a military problem. Its economic influence in the Philippines and its strategic relationship with the United States affects the action of both nations. China's strategic ambiguity concerning the resolution of the SCS dispute, its assertive expansion in the Asia-Pacific region, and the United State's ambivalent response to the Philippines security-sovereignty dilemma, influence the foreign policy of the three nations. Regarding the SCS dispute, the Government of the Republic of the Philippines most feasible approach is through a multilateral diplomatic and legal solution, yet it must use the alliance to mitigate China's military actions. Moreover, the ambiguity of the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty's provision created the sovereignty-security dilemma that disconnects the Philippines and the United States. Historically, this dilemma has remained unresolved since the beginning of the Cold War. Considering China's relentless threatening actions and the unresolved expected response of the United States in line with the MDT, the PH-U.S. alliance's future is uncertain. The China threat specifically on the SCS dispute and the MDT will continue to serve as disconnecting factors and an issue for the PH-U.S. alliance.

Regarding its unshared threats, the CNN presents a gap that impedes the full potential of the PH-U.S. alliance. The dwindling number of NPA's armed offensives does not indicate the weakening of the CNN. It suggests the CNN's strategic maneuver to concentrate on the political rather than on armed struggle. It also reveals that the NPA committed atrocities to coerce the masses in their extortion activities. Similarly, the NDF uses its united front and foreign networks to increase its financial capacity. The combined efforts of its armed and political components have propelled the overall financial capacity of the CNN that contributes to its resilience. Unchecked, the CNN could elevate its military ability to conduct violent and devastating armed offensives. Its unified legal

front continues to conduct a political struggle and infiltration of the government pillars that could harm the alliance and the GPH in the near future. The CNN constitutes a disconnecting factor that will continue to vex the alliance with damaging political and propaganda overtures.

The current thrust of the CNN shows that it is concentrating on the political struggle, which should serve as a potential warning for the GPH to strategize for this new battlefield. The CNN leadership knows that the political war is the most potent instrument for undermining the legitimacy of the GPH. For decades, the CNN has rectified its political blunders and intensified its political offensives. The CNN has successfully infiltrated the pillars of the GPH using political deceptions and maneuvering. The CNN has taken advantage of the weak governance and traditional political culture in accessing sensitive government positions. They serve as sleeper cells ready to be tapped for use by the CNN in pursuance of their strategic goal of stalemating the GPH. For instance, the party-list voting system has served in the CNN's favor. In the course of the PH-U.S. alliance, communist-affiliated congressional party lists and politicians manifest their strong opposition to the enhancement of the PH-U.S. alliance. The CNN's active united front comprising numerous communist-leaning sectors continue to hound the established frameworks and mechanisms of the PH-U.S. alliance. These sectors use propaganda, street protests, and other political activities to influence public perception and policy decisions threatening the integrity of the alliance.

In the case of the alliance mechanisms and agreement, the MDT provision remains a contentious concern between the Philippines and the United States. This issue continues to dampen the effectiveness of the alliance as a whole and the implementing mechanisms in particular. The presence of a formal treaty and established mechanisms has not spared the alliance from disintegration. The combination of the sovereignty-security dilemma and the enduring propaganda of the CNN have led to the alliance nadir. These issues continue to influence the outlook of the Philippine domestic audience and political players, contributing to the failure to achieve the maximum potential of the alliance. Furthermore, the Mutual Defense Board-Security Engagement Board (MDB-SEB), the 1998 PH-U.S. VFA, and the 2014 PH-U.S. Enhanced Defense Cooperation

Agreement (EDCA) has also disconnected the alliance to different degrees. Anchored on the MDT principles, these mechanisms have provided the alliance legal frameworks and instruments to confront traditional and non-traditional threats. At the same time, these mechanisms pose a constitutional problem. Classified as an executive agreement, several political leaders questioned the constitutionality of these mechanisms in which they cited the sovereignty-security issue. In several cases, both nations' representatives have a varying interpretation concerning the utility of the agreement and the alliance implementing frameworks and mechanisms.

Moreover, the CNN propaganda offensives clamor for the disbandment of these mechanisms, specifically when the United States armed forces members commit infractions. Although the alliance and its institutionalized mechanisms promote cooperation and interests, the unaddressed issues of the sovereignty-security, the constitutionality of the MDT, and the non-conformity with the established terms of reference of these mechanisms affect the efficacy of the alliance. Thus, the MDT and the numerous mechanisms anchored to it have disconnected from the alliance. These issues have created friction between the Philippines and the U.S. governments and have impeded the full potential of the alliance.

In summary, the dynamics of the alliance are a product of the interaction of existential threats, the strategic approach of the member states, and the alliance mechanisms. Therefore, the future of the alliance depends on the approach of the Philippines and the United States in resolving and managing these disconnecting factors. In this regard, the following are recommended.

#### **A. THE CHINA THREAT AND THE SCS DISPUTE**

The threat of China is political in nature, and military coercion as a response to China's strategy in the SCS is not feasible but likely to happen. The current state of the AFP inhibits a military approach. The Philippines cannot afford a shooting war with China as it considers it a zero-sum game, more to lose and nothing to gain. The ambiguity of the MDT prevents an automatic U.S. military response to aid the Philippines. Even if the United States responds as stipulated in the MDT, the cost of war and its implications

does not surpass the expected benefits. However, the United States must continue to strengthen the defense capacity of the Philippines in case of the unforeseen eventuality. China's assertive expansion in the Asia-Pacific, specifically in the SCS, must be resolved through diplomatic and legal methods. The issue must be resolved through multilateral means because the SCS dispute involves several claimant nations. The diplomatic means involve continuous high-level negotiations between disputing states. Concerned parties must revive or re-establish existing codes of conduct in the SCS to diminish nation-claimants provoking actions that could ignite a conflict. The United States must actively participate in the diplomatic process by providing avenues or forums in which the contending states can negotiate. It must influence its East Asian allies to use established regional institutions as a means to draw China to the negotiating table. In the legal aspect, the Philippines should continue to pursue its legal offensive. Elevating the legal dispute to the international level increases the legitimacy of the Philippine claim. Moreover, this action will mitigate China's military overture in the SCS. Although China shows resistance to the arbitration process, the Philippines must pursue its legal offensive with persistence as a means to influence other nation states and exemplify the use of the rule of law in dispute settlement.

The alliance must continue to strengthen its aggregate capacity. The Philippines should continue to enhance its military ability, and the United States must maintain its effort in guiding the development of the AFP's capacity. The alliance must continue to conduct joint training exercises to develop interoperability and competence as a form of contingency.

## **B. THE PHILIPPINE COMMUNIST INSURGENCY**

In the MDB-SEB, the Philippines and the United States should discuss a synchronization of their threat priority. As the top threat to Philippine security and a threat that destabilizes the alliance, the CNN could become a priority target. The alliance should design strategies individually tailored to undermine the complex nature of the CNN. The strategy should be in consonance with the holistic approach that the AFP is currently implementing. The GPH and the USG should use the alliance as an added



implement in the counterinsurgency operations. The United States should assist the Philippines in its capability upgrade and doctrine development specifically directed to the CNN. The alliance must use the MDB-SEB to formulate doable strategies specifically designed to counter the CNN's current strategy. The alliance must focus on developing the AFP capacity not only in terms of military equipment, but especially on strategy and tactics development. Applicable kinetic and non-kinetic strategy must be crafted, and the alliance should delve into developing the analytical capability of the AFP by introducing useful analytical techniques, tools, and training professed by the Naval Postgraduate School's Common Operational Research Environment (CORE) lab as a supplement to traditional analytical methods. Furthermore, the alliance could modify the effective and recognized counterinsurgency models to act as a feasible template in addressing the threat of the CNN. Taking a cue from its success in the GWOT in the Southern Philippines, the United States, and the Philippines should maintain a low signature profile. The reason for this is to pre-empt the current thrust of the CNN in which political struggle is their key strategy. The GPH must expect that the CNN will heighten its propaganda war and legal offensive against the established government and the alliance. The alliance must develop the AFP to excel in the information dominance field to counter the CNN's propaganda. An information campaign or counter-propaganda must be the center of effort at the tactical level of countering the CNN's narrative.

The AFP should continue to pressure the NPA through focused combat operations to dominate the battle zone and frustrate planned strategic moves. The AFP must focus on its established mandate while encouraging its government counterparts to strategize against their corresponding CNN component. In this case, the CNN components—the CPP, the NDF, and the NPA—must be confronted by the precise government component to undermine them efficiently. The GPH must take advantage of the unabated terror acts of the NPA to elevate the CNN's status as a terrorist group. In doing this, the GPH would create a significant maneuvering space to further weaken the CNN specifically the NPA. The CNN falls under the category of terrorism as defined in the article “The Definition of Terrorism,” where Charles L. Ruby states,

Terrorism is defined by Title 22 of the U.S. Code as politically motivated violence perpetrated in a clandestine manner against noncombatants. Experts on terrorism also include another aspect in the definition: the act is committed in order to create a fearful state of mind in an audience different from the victims. Whether or not an act is considered terrorism also depends on whether a legal, moral or behavioral perspective is used to interpret the act. If a legal or moral perspective is used, the values of the interpreter are the focus rather than the act itself. A behavioral perspective appears to be best suited for interpreting and reacting to terrorism.<sup>279</sup>

Most importantly, the alliance should make a concentrated effort in the counter-terrorist financing operations domain. Targeting the CNN financial network through a combined, concentrated effort using the alliance would increase the probability of weakening the insurgency. Strengthening the counter-financing effort would weaken the CNN. The GPH must add counter-financing operations as an additional component of its recent shift in strategy. It is essential that the GPH concentrate on undermining the CNN's financial capacity. The CNN's unrestrained financial capacity serves as the blood of the insurgency that sustains its resiliency. The GPH's concentrated effort on the armed component of the CNN and appeasing the people has ignored the lifeline of the insurgency. A paradigm shift on strategy against the CNN is necessary. The government must reinforce its counter-financing terrorism measures to ensure a nationwide level monitoring and counter action against the CNN. Likewise, the GPH must guarantee a prompt coordination and unity of effort with its foreign counterparts to enhance the efficiency of the strategy. The GPH must address the loopholes and gaps in enacted terrorism financing laws to mitigate the CNN's flexibility.

The GPH must design a holistic counter-finance strategy in order to provide an efficient and unified effort against the CNN. The CNN is a well-organized entity composed of a political party, a unified front, and an army. In order to disrupt the CNN's network, the GPH must conduct an in-depth study of the organizational structure, dynamics, and ties of the CNN. By dissecting the CNN piece by piece, the GPH will be able to field appropriate agencies to confront the vast network of the CNN. These proposed steps lead to the determination of the right approach in the conduct Counter

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<sup>279</sup> Charles L. Ruby, "The Definition of Terrorism," *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy* 2, no. 1 (2002): 9–14. doi:10.1111/j.1530-2415.2002.00021.x.

Terrorist Financing (CTF) operations against the CNN. It may further result in the formulation of policies, strategies, and doctrines or re-evaluation of the existing ones.

In addition, an information campaign must complement the CTF. Propaganda is the most efficient weapon of the CNN at the grassroots level; thus, it is necessary for the operators to expose the financial opportunism of the rebels, especially the leaders, and explain to the masses the difference between extortion and revolutionary tax.<sup>280</sup> Jun Alcover highlighted the importance of a propaganda war in which he argued, “It is usually not by force of arms that the communists bring a country down. It is by manipulating public opinion to their advantage.”<sup>281</sup> Nonetheless, it would entail the GPH’s political will, resolve, and consistency of actions and decisions to defeat the CNN through counter-financing terrorism operations.

### **C. THE MDT AND ITS MECHANISMS**

The resolution of the perceived ambiguity of the MDT requires high-level negotiations between Philippine and U.S. officials. From this context, the MDT will remain the strategic concern of the alliance. As discussed in this paper, the problem of the MDT has lingered throughout the alliance’s history. The author’s recommendation on this issue is to conduct an in-depth study on how to resolve the disparity in interpretation by the United States and the Philippines. The intent of the author is to highlight that the MDT is a disconnecting factor of the alliance that affects the efficiency of the alliance. Similarly, the various alliance mechanisms anchored in the MDT will continue to function as both connecting and disconnecting factors of the alliance. They bond the alliance, which provides an opportunity for the United States and the Philippines to confront jointly existential threats. However, these factors are contributing to the

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<sup>280</sup> Financial opportunism is an act of taking undue advantage financially, which is punishable by death in the CNN. In the “pagsisika” or self-revelation, the NPA members in a group meeting confess their fault to the movement. A member either confesses to a crime he committed or he will be charged by a witness. The author uses this counter propaganda technique against the NPA by exposing the lavish lifestyle of a leader or non-remittance of collected money by a leader or a member. This action creates mistrust and factions among the local NPA leaders and members.

<sup>281</sup> Jun Alcover, “Know the Enemy,” ANAD Party-list, <https://anadpartylist.wordpress.com/useful-articles/know-the-enemy/>.

inefficiency of the alliance attributed to the ambiguity of the agreement's provisions, commitments, and terms of reference.

The PH-U.S. alliance provides an opportunity for the Philippines to develop a credible defense capability through U.S. military assistance and combined training. The alliance also provides an interim deterrent instrument against direct foreign aggression. It serves as a stop-gap measure while the GPH improves its defense capability to a mere credible level. Furthermore, it provides the Philippines an increased capacity in the realm of human assistance and disaster response, which is very significant for the Philippines. The alliance provides the Philippines with an increased efficiency in and capacity for confronting jointly challenging effects of natural disasters. Nonetheless, the alliance does not assure a quick or reliable solution to all existential threats. However, the partners must interpret that the purpose of the alliance is not to end the threats, but rather to manage them properly and reduce these threats to an insignificant level. The Philippines and the United States must continue to nurture their alliance. The removal of the gray areas of the alliance mechanisms through a combined effort of the partners ensures the further strengthening of the PH-U.S. alliance. At any rate, the Philippines must continue to expand its diplomatic influence by reaching out to other rising Asian states to raise its stature in the international political arena. The GPH must continuously assess its international political ties and exercise flexibility, and if possible, circumvent bilateralism that hinders its potential to become a full-fledged member of the international community.

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